

Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

FOUNDED IN 1924

No. 10, Vol. XXVIII

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OCTOBER, 1952

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Mexico Monthly Review

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OCTOBER, 1952*

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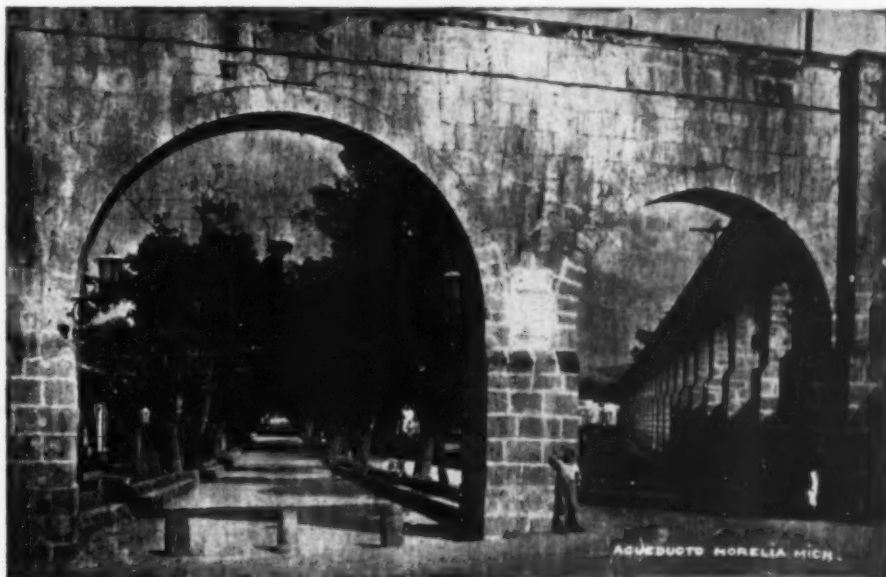
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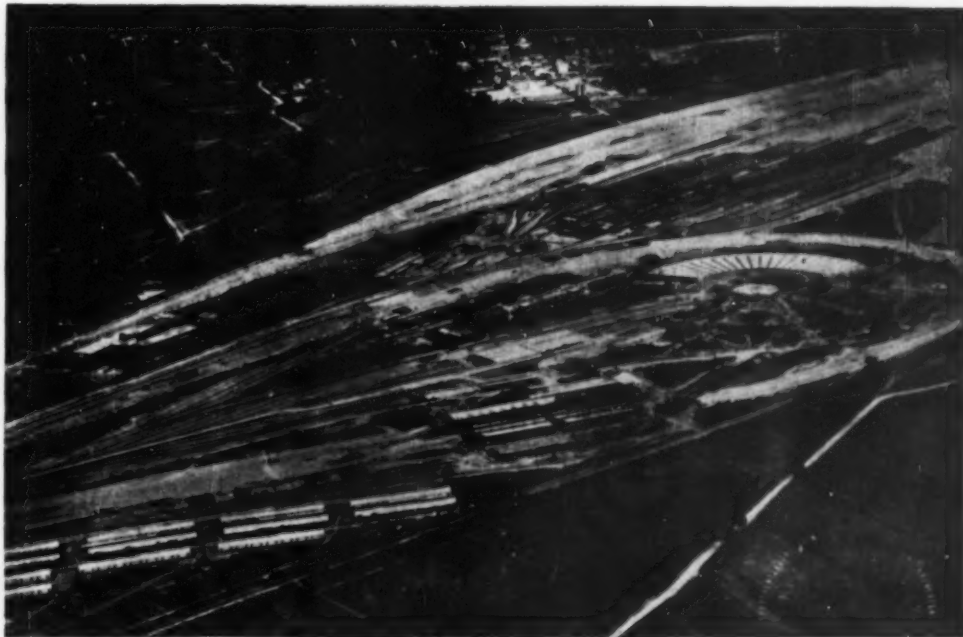
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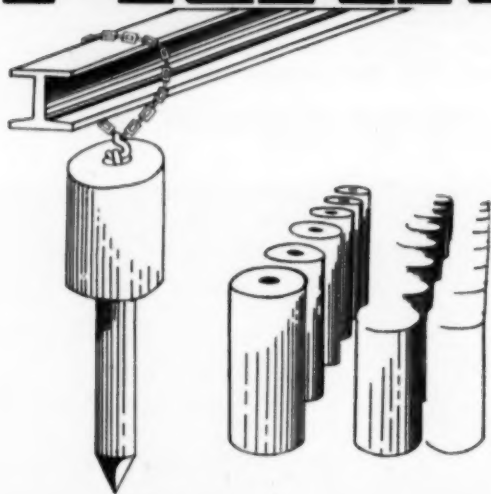
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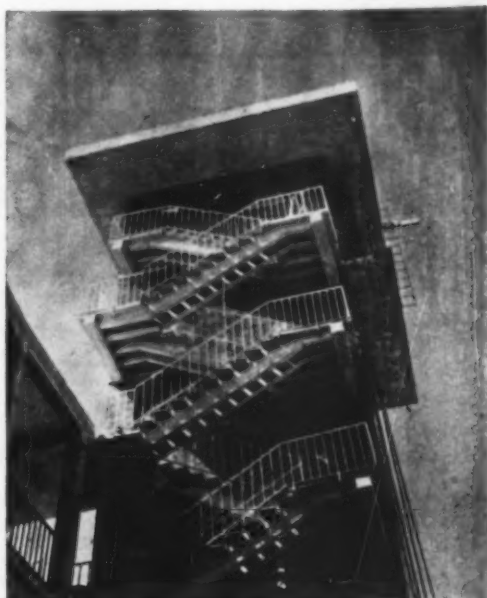
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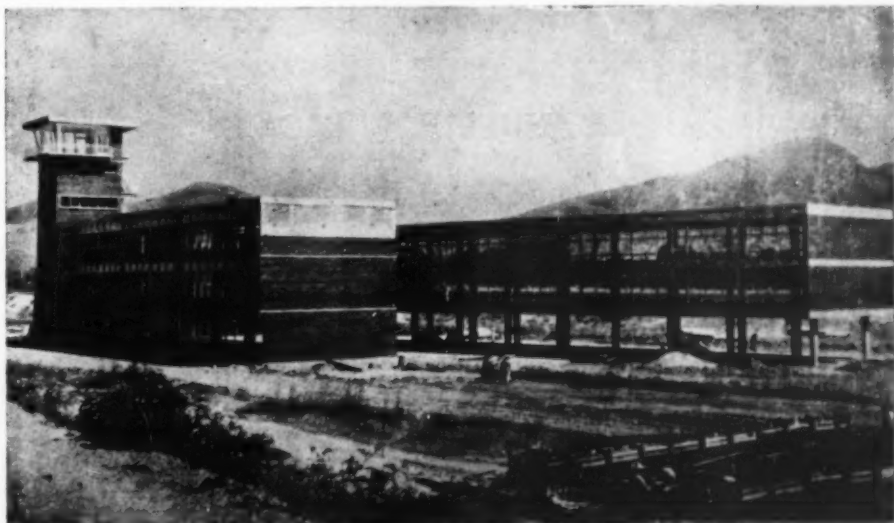
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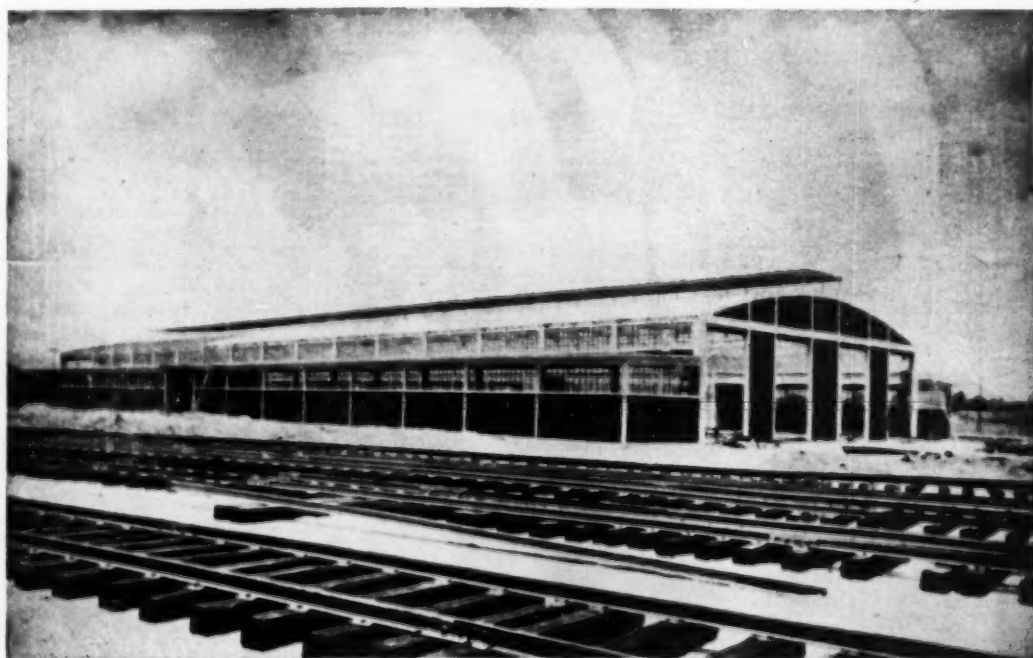
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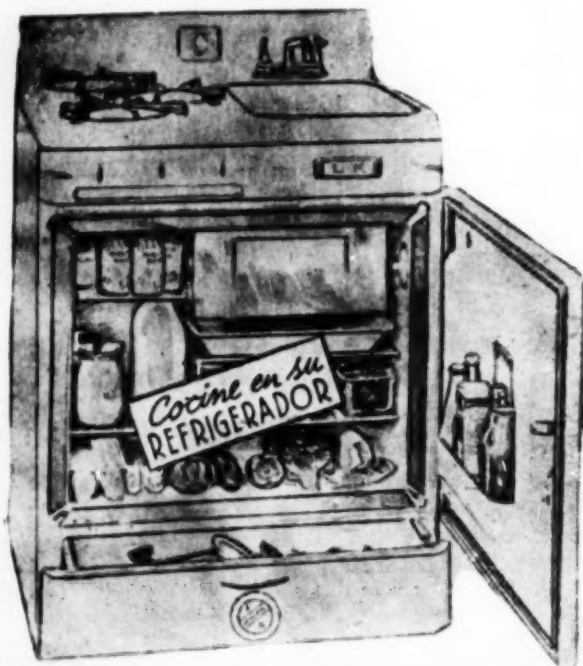
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upon the inauguration of the Great Freight Terminal of the
Valley of Mexico, taking pride in having supplied all the
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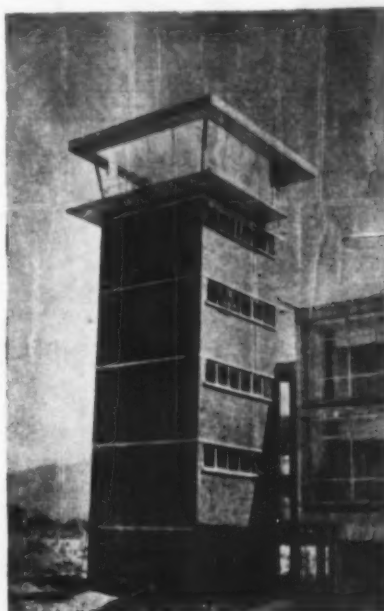
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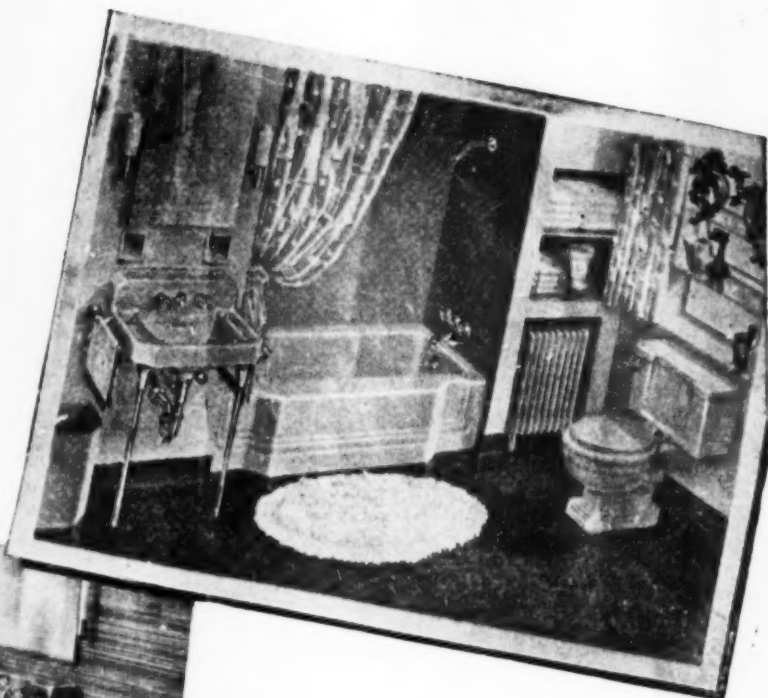
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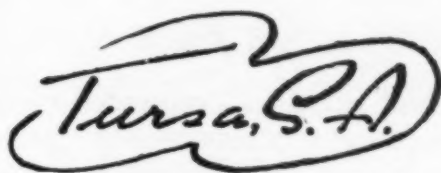
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Published on the first day of every month.

Registrada como Artículo de 2a. Clase el 22 de Octubre de 1927

Number 10 Volume XXVIII

October 1st, 1952

HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

Mexico's Subsoil Riches

ALTHOUGH the bulk of Mexico's population earns its livelihood from agriculture, its national territory, comprising in main part mountains and deserts, is largely unfit for this purpose. Nature, however, has compensated the poverty of its soil with a vast underground riches in minerals. Hence, following the Conquest, mining of silver and gold became the major source of wealth in new Spain, and in more recent years the exploitation of petroleum fields provided a similar source.

Under adverse agricultural conditions, Mexico, whose indigenous population has from time immemorial lived off the soil, must, however, produce its food, and must therefore seek the means of rendering its soil more productive. As result of a great constructive task carried out in the past twenty-five years by succeeding administrations, of reclaiming barren regions through irrigation, a task which assumed truly spectacular proportions during the past six years, the nation's agricultural production has increased to a considerable degree. On the other hand, the great increase in domestic consumption resulting from an unprecedented growth in population, has wiped out the gain, maintaining a market of perpetual agricultural scarcity, and a highly inflated price level.

Continued reclamation of barren regions, the introduction of modern methods and equipment and the perfection in the organization and function of community land holdings (ejidos) will undoubtedly further increase the national crop; but with climatic and topographical conditions such as they are it can be hardly expected that Mexico will ever become a flourishing agricultural country.

For this reason the progressive governments of the past twenty years have sought to enlarge the nation's economy through industrialization, with the consequence that today Mexico's factories provide employment for hundreds of thousands of workers and produce nearly all the staple goods the country consumes. The future growth and prosperity of the country's industries must, nevertheless, depend as much upon the growth of the market as upon the abundant supply of raw materials. Thus Mexico's latent subsoil riches bears at this time a new and decisive significance.

In the annual, and his final, report on the state of the nation delivered by President Miguel Alemán on the first day of last month before the joint body of Congress and Senate, defining on the whole a six-year record of brilliant achievement, he voiced his optimism regarding the future of industrialization, based on the country's unexploited reserve of subsoil wealth. The figures he presented veritably reveal that Mexico has all the basic elements for great industrial expansion.

An up to date survey of such latent resources brings to light, the President stated, that the mineral coal deposits solely in the state of Coahuila represent at a conservative estimate a billion two hundred and fifty million tons, while those in the state of Oaxaca may be calculated at several hundred million. Drawing on the ample reserves of iron ore, the country's metallurgical industry produced in 1952 600,000 tons of industrial iron and steel. With the expansion program which is being carried out by these industries at this time, it is estimated that production will reach 800,000 tons by 1954, and a probable volume of 1,500,000 by 1960.

As regards electrification, the President pointed out that in 1947 the Federal Commission of Electricity conducted twenty-three generating plants with a total capacity of 44,000 kilowatts of power, while at the present time it operates two hundred and fifteen plants which generate 390,000.

But it is in the field of petroleum production that Mexico has achieved its most conspicuous progress. Thirty years ago Mexico's oil production was exceeded only by that of the United States. But during the years of uncertainly preceding nationalization in 1938, its production declined to a fraction of its former great volume. During the following six years the government administration, inevitably confronted by multiple obstacles, barely managed to preserve the same reduced volume, of some 100,000 barrels per day. From 1938 to 1947 only one new producing field was discovered by the petroleum administration. But from the latter year to 1952 thirty-one new oil-bearing fields have been discovered and rendered productive, bringing up the current daily production to 250,000 barrels.

Of all the new fields, the one recently discovered at Tenixtepec in the state of Veracruz bears, in the President's words, the greatest promise. For with an initial well yielding 6,500 barrels a day, Tenixtepec, geologists believe, is likely to soon equal Mexico's richest field, the Poza Rica, which is less than fifteen miles away. With the discovery of this field it is authoritatively estimated that within a relatively short time Mexico might regain its former position as one of the major oil producing and exporting countries in the world. This forecast is highly significant, for the reason that Mexico must increase its exports in order to obtain an ample dollar surplus wherewith to acquire the equipment it must have for further industrialization.

With its latent subsoil riches in oil, iron, coal and precious metals, and a population that is inspired as never before by a will to work and to achieve a more abundant life, Mexico, despite its agricultural deficiency, is facing a future of wide economic expansion, wherein the machine will probably play a more important role than the plow.

Ball Boy

By Sylvia Martin

CARACOL: "¡Que malo eres!" That, of course, is Leonardo. "Buena boia!" That's Juan. "Aie! What a pity!" And that is Chucho. They are all ball boys at the Club Deportivo y Recreativo, which consists of two tennis courts enclosed by pink walls hung with bougainvillea. For five cents a set they retrieve balls for the "tenistas." On request, they play, doing surprisingly well with warped, hand-me-down rackets: their fee is a little higher then. And for nothing, they provide a running commentary on the game. You could not, in fact, buy their silence. Leonardo can be relied upon for jeers. Juan ignores bad shots, praises good ones. Chucho is always ready to cheer the loser with sympathy.

I asked Leonardo why Chucho was never at the courts on Sunday. "Other people go to church. Chucho pulls God's beard," he replied, Chucho being the familiar form of the popular name, Jesús. "He is a barber."

Learning of my interest, Chucho came to the courts one morning carrying a duffle bag and preceded by a strong odor of eau de cologne. It came from his hair. Gone were the sweatstained tennis shirt and shorts. He was the immaculate professional man. From the bag he drew a newly laundered sheet of unbleached muslin in which he swathed the protesting Leonardo. Then came his tools—combs, brushes, clippers, atomizer, and a dozen bottles of lotions. While he gave Leonardo a demonstration haircut, the club manager, magnetically drawn to an overfragrant bottle labeled "White Narcissus," offered himself as a customer. Arriving tennis players found the courts unrolled and the manager being clipped and scented by their best ball boy.

Chucho comes from the coastal state of Guerrero, famous for its resort of Acapulco. But Ayuda, Chucho's home, is known only to the little people of the jungle villages in the hinterland.

At twelve, Chucho was already wandering far from home, exploring his world and falling into small jobs to earn daily tortillas. I have a dim understanding of what his life must have been for I once visited this land's-end of Mexico. The villages are exotic. Each has its local customs and dialect. There is little saw among the tangled brush, marshes, and mountains. The trails are not safe, and the small clearings where people have lived for centuries are ablaze with ancient family feuds.

There are other villages made by runaway Negro slaves brought from Africa by the Manila galleons. The people here have grass houses built like giant beehives, and they dance on drums made from hollowed logs. Chucho knows them, and many other things. But he does not talk about them. He is shy and is afraid that his urban friends may laugh at him.

He has held many jobs. He worked for a silversmith, gathered wood for charcoal, carried loads on his back, made handles for machetes. Somewhere along the line he apprenticed himself to a barber. "I was a very bad barber," he says, "but the Indians didn't mind."

Roaming over the mountains to Cuernavaca, Chucho fell in with Leonardo and hung around the club until he fitted into the job of ball boy like a foot easing itself into a shoe. Then he married, and babies began to come. More money was needed. It took him a long time to buy the barbering tools. The straight razor alone cost him a month's tennis tips. Exploring the country far off the main highways, he discovered villages not advanced enough to support a permanent barber. They were made for him.

At dawn on Sunday, Chucho is off on his rounds, walking five miles to his first stop. The villagers await him impatiently. He is a social event, bringing

Continued on page 78



WATER COLOR.

By Arthur Faber.



DRAWING.

By H. Duesing.

Cumulative

By W. P. Covington-Lawson

DON José walked slowly toward the delapidated hacienda mansion, mounted the cracked and worn terra-cotta tiled steps, paced half-way down the wide veranda and sank wearily into a huge hide-covered easy chair. The chair groaned as he eased himself into its lumpy folds. He removed his large sombrero whose brim drooped to each side like the ears of a tired burro, wiped with his hand the perspiration from his forehead, ran his fingers through his thatch of wiry hair, and stared emptily, with unseeing eyes, into the color-splashed panorama of mountain and valley that he had known from its fancy.

He had just left the corral of El Matón, the famous Prahma bull, he had acquired some ten years before from a grasping foreigner by selling a choice part of the lower mountain meadow. He held in dis-

dain this money-grubbing individual who would barter and haggle, calling him behind his back "el caballero sin caballo," the horseman without a horse, but he had paid the outrageous price and had become the owner of a noble beast whose pedigree covered several pages and whose illustrious ancestry seemed to rival even that of his own distinguished breed of the Alvarez de Castañeda y Cienfuegos.

El Matón had worked hard to earn his purchase price and keep; the whole valley testified as to his fertility, strength and beauty, for his offspring were the pride and joy of a hundred haciendas, and José was pardonably proud of being its owner. And now—now when he needed his services the most, when the fees he charged for such services were of such dire importance, El Matón could no longer be relied upon. For some time he had fearfully observed the

beast's gradual decline, preserving the quite illogical hope that he may yet regain his virility, and even though it was highly discouraging he hardly blamed him for disdainfully moving away to the far side of the corral after a first cursory sniff when the neighbors brought in their ugly, stobbery, cud-chewing line. But when this very morning he had taken to the corral the great, great grand-daughter of this paragon of bulls, one of the most graceful and loveliest of heifers in the whole Valley of Oaxaca, as trim and well-formed as a deer from the Sacred Mountain of Santa Ynez, and El Matón had not even deigned to sniff, but had listlessly walked over to the other end of the corral to nibble on a dandelion that had grown through the fence, then don José knew that the disguise was off, that the curtain was down, that the chief actor was uninterested either in the *primma donna* or the applause, that it was the final bow, the end of the play, that the love-life of El Matón was finished.

And this, he felt, signified the end of something much greater—it seemed likewise to finish a part of his own life. Staring with unseeing eyes at the distance, he sank deeper into the ancient horse-hide chair whose squeak and groan echoed his own groaning spirit.

* * *

A shadow fell across his face. Tacho, the house-boy, stood near him barring the sun. "Don Pepe," he said softly. "Don Pepe, the very large *caballero sin caballo* is here and wishes to see you."

"Humm," uttered don José. Then, extracting from his waistcoat pocket a great gold time-piece that looked for all the world like a squashed apple, he opened its lid with a click and gazed at it warily with one open eye. "Ah que caray," he muttered under his breath. "Stopped again! What time has it gotten to be, Tacho?"

"It is after eleven," said Tacho glancing at the sun.

"The damned watch," don José grumbled. "Always stopping at the wrong time. Whenever I wanted time to stand still it ticked its damn face off, and when time seems to have some importance it stops. Well, it is rheumatic, worn out, too old. Time limps and dawdles on it." He gave a tiny lever on its side a twist, and there came the faint silvery tinkling of a musical chime that stopped midway on a note. "Your song is also finished," he added. Then, catching the absorbed look on the boy's face, he chided him: "Tacho, you sly bandit. Always I have seen it in your eyes. The sinful desire for something that is not yours. This watch—I believe you would have murdered me for it if you had have had the chance."

"But señor don Pepe!" exclaimed Tacho horrified.

"Never mind," countered don José. "I have carefully watched to see that you did not get the chance. Well, you have been with me all your life, and your father before you. This watch is older than your father's father. It is the great, great grandfather of all the watches. It has chimed the hours of love and death, the time for a tryst under the balcony and for the roar of cannon on the battlefield. Its chimes have delighted the ears of fine ladies and hawks; its heart has beat willingly, joyous'y, unfailingly through more than four generations of my illustrious ancestors. It was given to me by my great uncle Alejandro, whose father gave it to him, and who in turn received it from his father, who probably wore it as he wandered about these very same grounds when they were wilderness setting the lines of this finca—this estate that will soon pass to other hand than mine... As everything a man holds it must pass to other hands."

The boy listened attentively while don José, toying with his bulky watch, talked on. My patrón is in one of his strange moods, he thought, and I can hardly understand what he is saying. Then, when he saw don José extending to him the watch, and heard him say, "So now it will pass to yours. Keep it well," his eyes widened in astonishment.

"Mine? You... you mean mine?"

"Yours," said don José, stripping the heavy gold chain from his waistcoat and pouring it after the watch into his servant's trembling hands. "Go now," he said gently, "and tell that horseman without a horse that I will receive him. And," he added, "bring in the coffee and the small blue glasses. In the sala. Hurry now." He rose from the squeaking chair and went inside.

A hulking mastodon of a man came into the room and coughed mightily before he could utter a greeting, making the ornaments tremble on the walls. He began at once in a loud, halting mush-mouthed Spanish: "I have bad news for you, Señor. Your land is no good. I have just received the reports from the company. Worthless. No vale nada. Pero nada, nada. Nada."

Don José stiffened. "No hay mas nada, Señor?" he asked. "Is that all they had to say? Tell me, Señor. Or is it possible that you good men of business from the North cannot find some way to break bad news happily? I know my land is poor. Yet it has enriched the lives of generations of my ancestors. With its yields we have wine and danced and held our place in the world. Yes; it is probably time for it to be weary. It is probably old and worn like those of us left—who felt that we were its masters and lived long enough to find out at last that were were its slaves... But could you not say gently that my plantation is just not suited for the things you wish to grow? You see, Señor, this sudden disparagement of an old friend hurts. It makes one feel, as you say, 'nada.'"

The hulking man-mountain smiled. "Perhaps you are right, Señor. I am sorry. So let it put this way: From where I come from we like to get down to the point without mincing words. You see? So, pardon me again, but we just cannot use your land. According to the report it lacks what we need. No good for us. No good at any price."

Don José smiled wanly. "Bueno, Señor," he said. "I thank you."

* * *

After the visitor left he walked slowly to the patio, his gaze wandering over the amethystine haze that hovered about the distant mountains. It was the same view he knew so well, yet now something unutterably terrible lay in the mists that were clinging and climbing with clutching fingers through the palm fronds in the valley below. There was a chill in the sun, an ominous note in the midday song of the sonsonete.

He reached the hammock strung out under a jacaranda tree and stretched out full length, burdened with a feeling of total inadequacy, with a sense of frustration that had no beginning or end, the words 'nada, nada, nada' persistently resounding in his mind.

Presently he heard Tacho's cautious pace and heard him whisper fearfully, "Don Pepe, don Pepe, no hay agua."

"What?" he said rising with a heave. "There is no water? No water? What are you saying, imbecile? What has happened to the Spring of Guadalupe?"

"For many months past," hesitantly commenced Tacho, "the Spring has been less and less. Last week it was only a trickle, and today it has stopped completely."

Continued on page 79

Volcano

By Dane Chandos



WATER COLOR.

By Clara Thorward.

WHenever I can arrange to get away for a few days, I like to go off in the car and see a bit of the country. The Fountanneys had long wanted to take one of these trips with me, and a good opportunity seemed to present itself one week when the inn was almost empty. Mr. Humpel, when I asked him, said he did not at all mind being left alone.

"In my little house I am not depending," he said, "and I shall be very well here alone. I need only my room brought to order, and with the little Nieves I have a fine relationship."

I told him he shouldn't put it quite like that.

"Ah, it means another thing? Then with her I have a good connection."

So, on a bright, flustery morning the Fountanneys and I set off. I took Silvanito along, for it is often useful to have a little fetch-and-carry or someone to leave with the car so that your hub covers and valve caps aren't stolen. Besides I had the dogs with me, and Tippet needs a lot of watching. Though he brought no luggage, Silvanito had put on his best and cleanest clothes. His shirt, a little frayed at the edges,

was ice-cream pink, he wore odd socks, and round his sombrero he had written his name with a blue pencil.

"Are you afraid of losing it?" I asked.

"Oh no. That's so that people may know I can write."

We drove down the lake toward Jocotepec, but it was not possible to enjoy much of the scenery because the Professor was battering me with questions.

"D'you mean to tell me," he asked, "that you haven't even a rough itinerary?"

"I've no plans at all, Professor. Whenever I see a side road I like the look of, I go along it."

This idea enchanted Mrs. Fountanne. Not so the Professor.

"Then you don't even know where we shall spend the night?"

"Exactly."

We drove in silence for a few minutes. Then, "Where are we making for after Jocotepec?"

"I don't know, Professor. Where would you like to make for?"

"No, it's your party," he said. "I don't want to butt in."

truction, have been worth millions to the tourist trade about a sarape I was having made. Professor Fountanne criticized the loom construction and the form of the bobbin; he found fault with the weave and the pattern of the half-finished sarape and said that the colored wools would not be fast. He felt very much better. But I knew he'd not be happy until he had some sort of schedule to keep us all up to, so I said to Mrs. Fountanne, "How would it be if we went along the lake to Jiquilpan to see if we can't find Candelaria? And then perhaps we could go up to Uruapan; I'd like to get some lacquer trays for the inn."

"That sounds very nice," she said.

"If you're going to Uruapan," said the Professor, "we can go to Paricutin."

"What ever for?" said his wife. "We've all seen it before."

The Professor said, "I would never allow a volcano to appear in any country I was in without investigating it thoroughly."

I believed him. And as the miles ran out against the dull blue glitter of the lake, he talked about every form of volcanic activity, from Krakatoa to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. The little towns went by—San Luis Soyotán. The place of the palms for plaiting, with the clumsy cement seats lining the plaza; Tuxtepec. The place where they make petticoats of rabbit skin, with the white chapel on the green hillock; Tizapán. The place above a deposit of chalk, always unkempt and litter strewn. Then we turned away from the lake, winding over the hills above a series of alluvial valleys where crops grow like Jack's beanstalk and every level stretch is a patchwork of corn and sugar cane. Every time we stopped along the route Silvanito had some refreshment—now a pale'a, which is a block of flavored water ice on a stick, now a length of sugar cane, now a glass of tamarind water. He gossiped everywhere and usually brought back a scrap of information or rumor.

"Here in this village," he observed, spitting sugar cane out of the ear, "while the volcano the Señor Professor says we're going to see was small, the people were all very frightened and kept their children locked in their houses because it was said that trucks were going through the villages collecting children to throw into its fire, in order that it should not be very hard." He tore off another strip of sugar cane with his teeth. "I told them, pues, that nothing like that happened in Ajijie."

I had never heard of this kind of human sacrifice here, though Mexico has as bloody a history in this respect as any country in the world. The Aztecs offered thousands of victims to their war god, Huitzilopochtli, on whose altars, daily, steamed the hearts of scores of war captives. But then war was the Aztec's trade, and their very survival in the midst of numerous and more highly civilized rivals depended on their military prowess. Even the peace-loving Maya practiced human sacrifice, but in their isolated and parched limestone plain of Yucatán an assured water supply was a far more pressing need than any victory in battle, and so it was to the water god that they hurled the young virgins whose gold masks and slender bones have been brought to light in recent years from the bottom of the sacred well of Chichen Itzá. Among primitive peoples it seems that human offerings were made only to those gods who had to be placated at all costs, and though Mexico has always been subject to volcanic disturbance, her people have not labored under the ever present fear of sudden destruction, which has made, in other lands, a paramount deity of volcanic force. Mexico's volcanoes have elected to be dignified rather than destructive, and the stately giants that overhang the Valley of Mexico, Popocatepetl, and Ixtaccihuatl, far from being a menace and source of des-

truction, have been worth millions to the tourist trade of the country. Paracutin is, in fact, rather disreputable—something of a parvenu beside them. I decided that if the Professor insisted I'd let him and Silvanito go alone in the car.

It was long past midday, and the lake was far behind and below us. We were driving through empty arbutus-covered hills, broken here and there by the ubiquitous maize fields, now bare and dusty. In one of these we saw a vast number of black birds feeding. The passage of the car must have startled them, for suddenly they all rose together in a great whispering cloud and, as they wheeled away from the road, high over head there were all at once displayed myriads of brilliant yellow breasts, transforming in a second an undulating black carpet into a vivid golden canopy.

"Species of oriole," said the Professor. "They make pocket-shaped nests out of bark. Isn't it time for lunch?"

* * *

Mrs. Fountanne unpacked bottles and glasses, and we stopped by the roadside, sitting on a rough stone wall while Silvanito got out the picnic. A thousand feet beneath us stretched a wide oval plain whose orchards and water meadows and little earthen lanes radiated from a chessboard village, dominated by the dome of a white church.

"They say," observed Silvanito, "that those of down there all own many cattle and are fat fat, and even a poor man eats fried udder for breakfast."

For Mexicans, Jiquilpan's one claim to fame is that it is the home town of General Lázaro Cárdenas, the reforming president of the Republic. Cárdenas nationalized the oil fields and the railroads; his wholesale expropriation of big landholdings created communal farms all over Mexico; to him was due the establishment of thousands of country schools; under him began the industrial drive which may yet restore to Mexico her position as leader of Spanish America. Jiquilpan has to thank him for many gifts and privileges, including the highway itself, and is naturally proud to be his birthplace and home. More important to me, however, was the fact that here too lived one Remedios Valdez and her daughter Candelaria.

"I know where they live," Silvanito had said. "In a very fine house that they rent from a man who sells wire of little bars, and you can easily recognize it by the long stone bench outside and by the pepper tree; I know because Candelaria herself told me, and it is in the street of the Fifth of May and has a blue door."

We drove round the plaza a couple of times and after a few misdirections found the house. A woman with a skin the texture and color of potato peel appeared in the doorway wearing a freshly ironed dress of violet mirror satin.

"Could you tell me if Candelaria lives here?" I asked. "Candelaria and her mother, Remedios?"

"Oh, no, señor."

A gray turkey hen wandered out of the house onto the sidewalk, and the woman caught it by the long string that was tied to its leg.

"Could you tell me where they live?"

"That yes no, señor."

She was not in the least bit unfriendly. She picked up the turkey hen, tucked it under her arm, and stood smiling at me in silence.

"Well, I'm very sorry to have bothered you," I said. "My mozo told me they lived here—"

"Nothing of bother, señor." She paused to throw the turkey hen back into the house, and added, "You

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The Aleman Plan of Railway Rehabilitation

Summary of a Brilliant Six-Year Task

By Stewart Morton

WHEN six years ago the government presided over by Miguel Alemán initiated its task the National Railways of Mexico were confronted by an extremely difficult economic situation. Its liabilities amounted to 263,594,758.38 pesos, a burden further increased by the deficit accruing from the operation of the Interoceanic and the Michoacán and Pacific lines, summing 19,896,197.92 pesos. On the other hand, the recent increase in the price of fuel and in the wage scale signified an annual deficit of 96,624,245.04 pesos. These increases, as well as the above mentioned liabilities, were economically unassured, for they could not be met by any possible increase in income. Thus railroad operation not only represented a gravely unbalanced process but could not provide for the most urgent maintenance needs of trackage, motive power and equipment. The discouraging panorama could be, in fact, described as follows:

The routes were almost unfit for traffic because their roadbeds were deteriorated and their rail, too light to bear the weight and speed of trains, was worn out through many years of use. The tractive equipment was almost totally antiquated, for of the 986 steam locomotives in service 693—of which 184 dated from the past century—had outlived their normal period of usefulness; while there were only 55 Diesel-electric engines. The rolling stock, insufficient and old, consisted of 17,297 freight cars, of which 10,473 were more than twenty years old. The shops could not render adequate service because of slow and inefficient working methods and old and obsolete equipment. Stations and warehouses were in large part ruinously old and inappropriate.

Lic. Manuel R. Palacios, General Manager of the National Railways of Mexico, who realized the Alemán Plan of Railway Rehabilitation.



President Miguel Alemán, author of the Alemán Plan of Railway Rehabilitation.

Facing this discouraging picture, the management of the National Railways, headed by Lic. Manuel R. Palacios—whose nature combines the rare qualities of lofty idealism, clear vision and an extraordinary capacity for practical effort—undertook the gigantic task of totally rehabilitating the system. It shouldered this task in the knowledge that otherwise it would have to assume the responsibility for the country's economic collapse resulting from the imminent paralysis of its principal means of communication.

The comprehensive plan—1947-1952—known as the Alemán Plan of Railway Rehabilitation—was formulated during the first months of the present administration, and despite the obstacles presented by the shortage of steel and machinery in the local and United States markets, it has been gradually and scrupulously realized almost in its total scope, representing an investment of 1,013,169,669.28, a figure unparalleled in national railway annals. A brief survey of this achievement reveals its veritable magnitude.

TRACKAGE

The immediate goal was to eliminate the sources of operation tons ensuing from obsolete narrow-gauge routes, which involved a costly process of freight transfer, impeded fluidity of traffic, and impossibilitated standardization of motive power equipment.

In pursuit of this goal, up to this date 1,629 kilometers of narrow-gauge routes have been widened to standard gauge. These comprise the lines Mexico-Vernacruz-Alvarado; Mexico-Acambaro and its branches to Zitacuaro and El Oro; Mexico-Puebla-Oaxaca and its branches Puebla-Oriental, Tehuacán-Esperanza, Oaxaca-Taviho and Oaxaca-Tlaxiula. The total investment in widening these routes represents 131,603,397.04 pesos.

Confirming the expectations, the widened Mexico-Vernacruz route has increased its traffic volume during 1951 by 180% as compared with the annual average of the preceding three years. The efficiency of freight trains, measured in gross kilometer-tons per train hour, rose from an average of 8,000 during the years 1945 to 1947 to 18,200 in 1951. The number of freight trains was reduced from the average of 9,494 during the preceding three years to 7,458, thus lowering operational costs, for with a smaller number of trains this route carried a considerably greater volume of freight. Similar results were obtained on the Mexico-Acambaro route, for the average of 38,339 gross kilometer-tons handled in 1945 rose to an average of 60,740 in 1950 and 1951, notwithstanding the reduction in the number of trains from 10,292 in 1946 to 7,482 as the yearly average during 1950 and 1951. These salient figures eloquently demonstrate that the standardization of trackage achieved by the present administration has been amply justified.

REHABILITATION

The rehabilitation of lines represented a total investment of 234,883,557.39 pesos. Utilizing heavy-weight rail, 112.3 pounds per yard, the administration rehabilitated the following routes:

A) The Mexico City-Laredo line, totally rehabilitated through reinforced roadbed, new crossties and ballast and heavy-weight rail, opened to national and international traffic a route which favorably compares with the best in the world.

B) The San Luis Potosi-Tampico line, throughout its 444 kilometers, was equally rehabilitated with reinforced roadbeds, new crossties, ballast and 112.3 pound rail.

C) The 520 kilometers comprising the Monterrey-Tampico line were also completely rehabilitated with 112.3 pound rail.

D) The section of 353 kilometers between Mexico City and Irapuato along the Mexico City-Ciudad Juarez line was rebuilt with new crossties, while 112.3 pound rail was laid along 182 kilometers.

In all, 2,607 kilometers comprising the above lines have been rehabilitated with heavy-weight rail, which, added to the 742 kilometers of the widened routes that have been also provided with 112.3 pound rail, make up a total of 3,349 kilometers.

Rehabilitation work is being carried out at present along the section Irapuato-Jimenez of the Mexico City-Ciudad Juarez route, 1,021 kilometers in length, likewise with heavy weight rail.

E) The roadbed along the entire 260 kilometer length of the Irapuato-Guadalupe line has been reinforced with new ballast and crossties. This road will be provided with 112.3 pound rail pending its arrival from the United States.

The rail salvaged from the above named rehabilitated routes has been employed in the rehabilitation of the following branch and secondary lines:

A) The Ixtapee-Tapachula line, 457 kilometers long, has been equipped with 85 and 90 pound rail, and will be completely finished before the end of the present administration.

B) The rehabilitation of the branch Tres Valles-San Cristobal, 48 kilometers in length, has been totally completed.

C) The Veracruz-Ixtapee and Tierra Blanca-Cordoba routes, 553 kilometers in length, have been rebuilt with new roadbeds, while new rail has been placed over a section of 30 kilometers.

D) The rehabilitation of the 331 kilometers comprising the Monterrey-Matamoros line will be concluded before December 1st. of this year, when the present administration terminates its period.

E) The Perdon-Monterrey branch, 89 kilometers in length, has been rebuilt over a section of 64 kilometers with reinforced roadbeds, new crossties and 85 and 90 pound rail.

Mountain section of the Mexico-City Acambaro line.



President Alemán, accompanied by Manuel R. Palacios, Ramón Beteta, Minister of Finance, and other government officials, inspects the architectural project of the Great Passenger Terminal of the Valley of Mexico.



PENERATION, CONNECTION and BRANCH LINES

A) The grading and bridge construction along the Rio Bravo-San Fernando line which penetrates the cotton-growing zone of Tamaulipas, has been completed along its 42 kilometer length, and rail is to be placed as soon as the trunk lines which are being rehabilitated with 112.3 pound rail will make this material available.

B) The San Juan del Rio-San Nicolas line, connecting the trunk lines from Mexico City to Laredo and Ciudad Juarez, necessary to facilitate operation and reduce costs, has been concluded in grading, and excepting a short section of 8 kilometers has been equipped with rail.

C) To reduce the grade and improve train operation, modifications have been made in the course of lines at La Borreguita, on the San Luis-Tampico route, and at Andresito, on the Mexico-Veracruz line, while similar modifications are being carried out at present along the Interoceanic route, at Dobladero, G-28, G-32 and G-242, and at Tamarindo to Cardel.

7,584,443 cross-ties have been employed in the widening, rehabilitation and conservation of railway routes during the six years of the present administration.

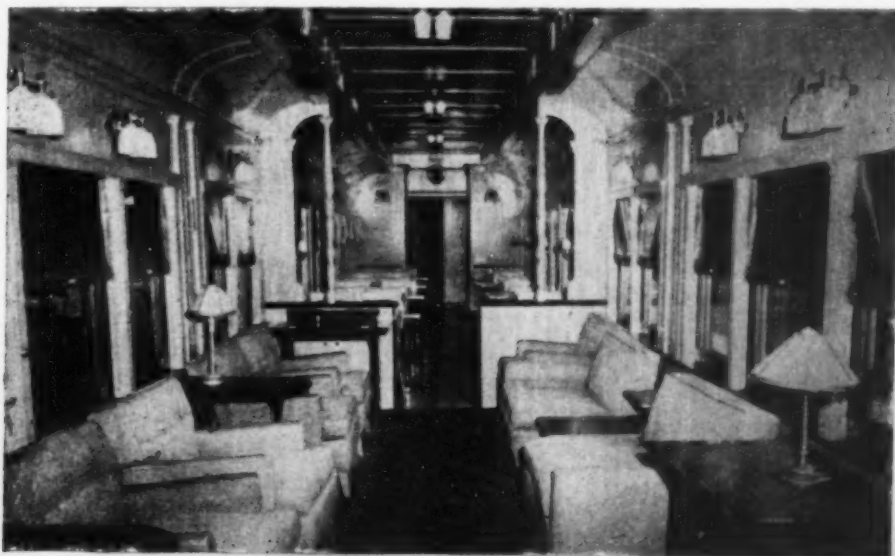
ELECTRO-COMMUNICATION, BUILDINGS, WATER AND FUEL PLANTS

The sum of 43,211,774.37 pesos has been invested by the present administration in electro-communication, buildings, water and fuel plants. In buildings, the program included the construction of new stations at Lombardía, Teziutlán, Zimatlán, Huichapan, Progreso, Cardel, Doña Rosa, Quiotepéc, Relixtlahuaca, and the reconditioning of stations and warehouses at Veracruz, San Miguel Allende, Valles and other points of the system.

New hospitals are being erected at Tierra Blanca and Matías Romero, and First Aid stations at Oaxaca, Nonoaleo, Aguascalientes and Doña Cecilia.

Of the new water and fuel plants built by the present administration the most important ones are those at Empalme, Jilotepec, David Alonso, Nonoaleo and Talía. Wells have been drilled at Alamillo, Gregorio García, Ceballos, Jiménez, Talía, Calvo, Queretaro, San Agustín and Zacatecas.

The Alemán Plan of Railway Rehabilitation lent special attention to the modernization of leading terminals along the system, since it is obvious that their proper location, technical planning and mechanization in train-handling represent a considerable saving in the costs of operation, through greater speed of movement, utmost utility of rolling stock and an acceleration in the task of loading and unloading. The program that has been realized includes the following works:



Lounge car of the new luxury train to be put in service on the Mexico City-Laredo route.



Rehabilitation work on the Mexico-Oaxaca Line.

Construction of Terminals at Empalme Escobedo, with an investment of 5,297,470.11 pesos; at Chihuahua, with that of 2,672,878.00 pesos, and at Jalapa, at the cost of 16,222,377.53 pesos. In addition to these investments, the partial construction of Terminals at Guadajara, Monterrey, Nuevo Laredo and Puebla, the improvements carried out at Irapuato, San Luis Potosí, and the new Passenger Station of Buenavista, comprise a total sum of 135,865,386.64 pesos.

TRACTION POWER

The improvement in the volume of traction power, with an investment of 453,517,398.18 pesos was achieved through the purchase of 169 Diesel locomotives with a total of 237,900 H.P. This represents an increase of 375% in traction power over that available prior to the present administration. It must be mentioned that 18 of these locomotives were acquired through financing by various private enterprises, namely, the Cerveceria Cuauhtemoc, S. A., Vidriera Monterrey, S. A., and Fundidora de Hierro y Acero de Monterrey, S. A., which is being gradually liquidated by the National Railways. Four additional Diesel units are being furnished by Altos Hornos de Mexico, S. A. and twelve steam locomotives by the American Smelting and Refining Co., upon a similar basis of financing.

FREIGHT AND PASSENGER ROLLING STOCK

The present administration acquired 250 steel gondolas and 100 freight cars; 35 mail-express cars; 102 first-class passenger coaches, 67 pullmans and 6 din-

ers. In addition to this, acquisition has been made of 27 pullmans, diners and observation cars of deluxe type, and 30 day-coaches of first class from the Schindler company in Switzerland, and 50 first class day-coaches from the Enterprises Industrielles Charrentaises in France, at the cost of 69,399,797.70 pesos.

SHOPS

Special shops for Diesel engines have been built at Mexico, D. F., San Luis Potosí, Monterrey, and Doña Cecilia; while steam engine shops have been either built or modernized at Saltillo, Nonoalco, Aguascalientes, Buenavista, San Luis Potosí, Acámbaro, Puebla, Monterrey and Gomez Palacio. To equip the above Diesel shops and to improve the steam engine shops throughout most of the system, the administration invested the sum of 14,088,150.66 pesos.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Added to the task of physical rehabilitation described in its salient points above, the government carried out a necessary task of administrative reorganization consisting of the following phases:

I.: The system of annual budgets, based on foregone calculation of income, created a rigidly controlled schedule of costs, putting an end to the procedure of unplanned expenditure. At the same time, the newly created Department of Internal Control and Budget, a complementary and indispensable organism for the efficient function of the system, has achieved the aim of maintaining a permanently solvent disbursement of annual appropriations.

Men at work on the Mexico City-Oaxaca line, widening the rail through Tomellin Canyon.



Section of the gigantic Car-Repair Shops at the Freight Terminal of the Valley of Mexico.



2.: A new Organic Law was enacted, as the basis for a new superior organism which aids the General Management in the solution of current problems, sharing with it administrative responsibilities, creating specific commissions for the study of budgets, income and expenditure, taking part in the selection for purchases made by the Administration and in the study and approval of the plan for physical improvement.

3.: Regulation of Car Service, which establishes priorities, routine and administrators who assign the cars to users, creating responsibilities in said service.

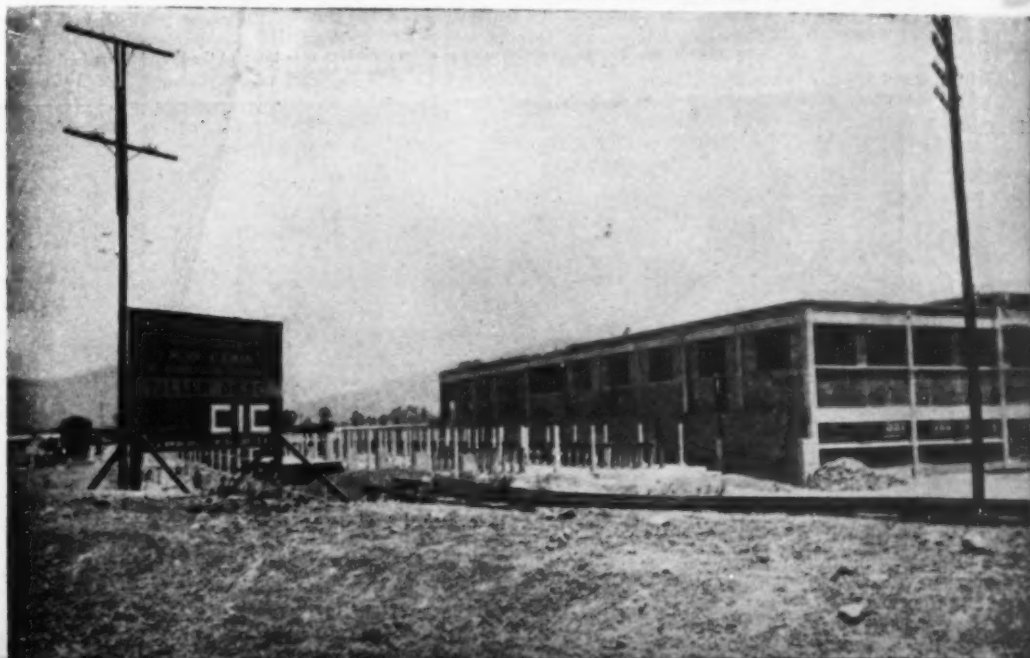
4.: Technical Department of Motive Power and Machinery. At the beginning of the present administration there was only one Mechanical Engineer who lent technical attention to the National Railways' motive power and equipment. The above department was created to greatly enlarge the scope of this service. Manned by qualified electrical, mechanical, metallurgical and chemical engineers, its function is to develop programs of repairs, to determine the annual methods, to exact compliance with established norms and to provide technical guidance. The components of this body, graduates of National Technical Schools, are in large majority workmen who by their own effort obtained their titles, or sons or relatives of railway workmen.

5.: Complying with the indications of the Federal Executive, in January and February of 1949

an agreement was concluded with the railway labor union body, which established new conditions of work, that, without affecting the fundamental rights or salaries of the personnel, elevate the efficiency in work and thereby enhance railway productiveness.

6.: A body known as the Auxiliary Technical Commission was created, composed of persons who under the direction of the General Manager are entrusted with the permanent attention to matters related to the internal function and operation of the services, such as the vigilance over the organization that collects, classifies and disposes of scrap metal; the reorganization and permanent supervision of the shop routines; the formulation of programs of acquisition and repair for the substitution of condemned equipment, and the prevision of that which is necessary for the growing demands of freight and passenger service; and maintaining a program of balance between the available rolling stock and motive power. It, moreover, conducts a comprehensive study of crosstie requirements for the task of rehabilitation and conservation, and of the purchase programs of said materials; exercises vigilance over the yearly general inventory system; creates the basic scheme for average requirements of repair materials; studies the methods employed in ordering equipment and materials; supervises the exercise of the budget and the revision of the annual balance-sheet, and studies organization and systematization in accountancy and audit.

Repair shops for Diesel locomotives. Freight Terminal of the Valley of Mexico.



MEXICAN RAILWAY

The loan of five million dollars obtained by the Mexican Railway from the Eximbank, redeemable during the next ten years, was distributed in the following manner: 36,268,093 pesos for the acquisition of 77,800 tons of 112.3 pound rail; 257,337.50 pesos for the purchase of road machinery; 3,460,000.00 pesos for an electric sub-station at Maistrata; 2,132,447.65 pesos for the acquisition of shop machinery, and 1,081,250.00 pesos for parts for electric locomotives.

The rehabilitation work on this route was started at the beginning of 1951, bringing forth the following results: Along the section of the Second Division, cables and accessories were renovated, the roadbed was leveled and ballasted, bridges and culverts were rebuilt, and the cuts at kilometers 251 to 274 were widened. Along the curves, between kilometers 304 and 408, wooden crossties were substituted with those of steel. The cost of this work amounted to 7,091,669.15 pesos, of which 5,216,064.61 pesos were derived from the Eximbank loan and 1,875,594.54 pesos from this railway's own resources.

During the past six years 1,257,922.62 pesos were invested in the purchase of shop machinery.

Nine houses were built at Orizaba for the benefit of workmen, while through the cooperative effort of the Administration and the labor union a hospital with 38 beds is being erected at the above city.

VERACRUZ TERMINAL

Prior to the present administration the investments for improvement of property or even for simple conservation were very small and sporadic. In fact, the warehouses lacked cranes, scales and other mechanical equipment, which retarded loading and unloading operations and entailed added costs; the yards and wharves were in a deplorable condition of abandon, which caused great loss of time, increased costs and damage to equipment.

The urgently needed rehabilitation of the Veracruz Terminal was carried out with a subsidy of 5,000,000.00 pesos authorized by the Federal Executive, and with the Terminal's own resources. With the funds of the subsidy the warehouses 11, 12, 13 and 14 were repaired and enlarged from a former capacity of 8,605 sq. meters and 8,500 tons to 19,270 sq. meters and 15,100 tons. These repairs included pavement of flooring, new doors and windows, metallic structures, leveling of wharves, concrete paving of 17,075 sq. meters and of 6,928 sq. meters with asphalt.

Two 20 ton cranes, 12 scales of 5 ton capacity, 4 transporters, 3 motolifts, 100 trailers and 100 steve-

dore type wheelbarrows, fire extinguishing apparatus, as well as a large compressor, were acquired at the total cost of 3,524,122.45 pesos.

The roofs of the station, the platforms and warehouses were waterproofed and the buildings painted, at the cost of 448,083.12 pesos.

Materials for the railway, such as 112.3 pound rail, crossties, two automatic scales and other equipment were obtained at the expenditure of 84,418.02 pesos. Three 70 ton, 600 H.P. Diesel-electric engines were acquired, at the cost of 1,268,409.06 pesos.

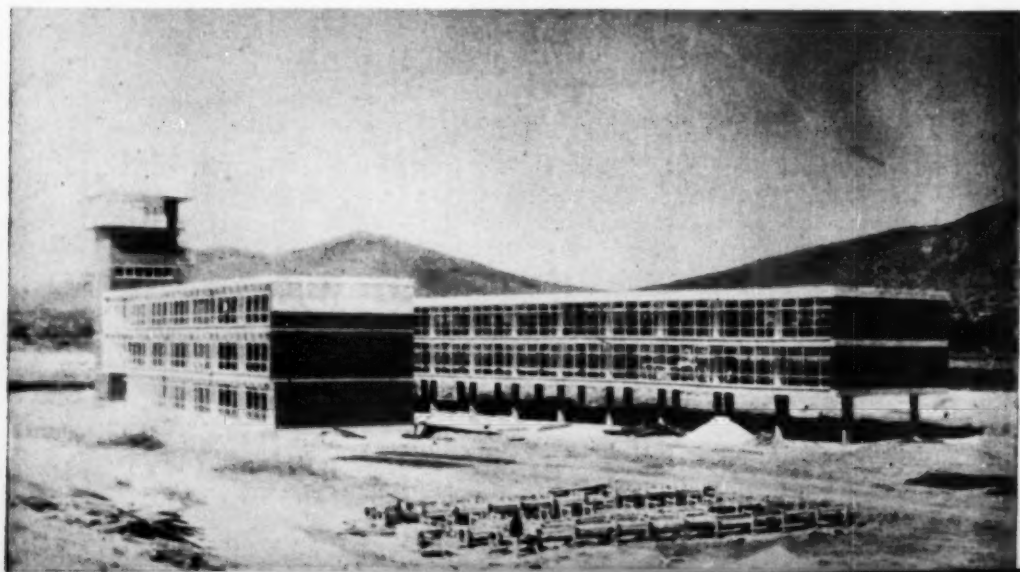
With the Terminal's own resources a purchase of seven 5 ton cranes, five tractors and fifty trailers was made for the maritime zone, representing a cost of 855,505.66 pesos.

The trackage on wharf 5, 1,500 meters in length, was reconstructed, its former 65 pound rail having been substituted with that of 100 pounds. 14,426.25 sq. meters of street grounds were paved with concrete, and 4,900 with asphalt. This work represented a cost of 566,709.18 pesos. New drainage installation at the round house, pits and a gyrating table in the shops, were built at the cost of 20,350.50 pesos. An additional sum of 206,189.35 pesos was spent on a Diesel plant, a pit for fuel salvage, tool-houses, fixed boilers in the round house and foundry shops. 260,000.00 pesos were spent in the construction of yard and telegraph offices, and 15,050.25 on lavatories in the car repair shops.

The station platforms were prolonged by 649.27 sq. meters, at the cost of 12,590.97 pesos. Special quarters for the National Railways Express were adapted, while the platforms fronting the warehouse of the above department were paved at the cost of 36,612.56 pesos. The warehouse No. 4 was demolished, due to the modification of the platforms, and was substituted by a new structure whose cost is 150,075.00 pesos. To improve the yards its tracks were placed over new crossties at the cost of 111,151.35 pesos. Two motors were acquired for the operation of additional cranes in the warehouses, as well as rubber hose for fire emergencies, at the cost of 83,989.00 pesos. A 25 H.P. motor was obtained for the gyratory table; two Meuser lathes were acquired for the Mechanical Shops; two groups of moto-generators and an electric brush were installed in the sub-station, at a total expenditure of 367,504.92 pesos.

To assure an ample supply of water, two artesian wells were drilled and equipped with pumps, at the cost of 59,812.80 pesos, while the installations at the Lagarto Plant were rebuilt at the cost of 20,898.00 pesos.

Superintendency, Mexico-Queretaro—one of the modern structures at the Freight Terminal of the Valley of Mexico.



127,173.95 pesos were spent on furniture and office equipment, while the modernization of office quarters represented an expenditure of 130,345.00 pesos.

The detailed figures and facts enumerated above reveal the veritable scope of the task achieved by the present administration in rehabilitating the Veracruz Terminal, so that it may fully meet the present and future needs of Mexico's principal maritime gateway.

FREIGHT TERMINAL OF THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

Truly outstanding among the major projects which comprise the Aleman Plan for Railway Rehabilitation is the construction of the great Railway Terminal of the Valley of Mexico, a gigantic undertaking representing an investment of more than two hundred million pesos, largely obtained through the disposal of land that is no longer required by the railway.

The magnitude of this project may be fully appreciated considering that its trackage spread has an extension of 216 kilometers, that a volume of two million cubic meters was handled in its ground preparation, while 460 thousand cubic meters of ballast and 432 thousand cross-ties were employed in the laying of the trackage.

Two major units comprise the Railway Terminal of the Valley of Mexico: the Passenger Terminal, which will occupy a spacious site in the vicinity of the present Buena Vista Station, and the Freight Terminal, extending over a large area near the town of Tlalnepantla. The latter terminal, which will be completed this year, has been planned to fill the following objectives:

- 1) To render the handling of incoming and outgoing freight more efficient, rapid and economical by eliminating the various widely scattered stations which are functioning today and concentrating all operations in a single terminal.
- 2) To solve diverse administrative and technical problems, hitherto caused by the dispersion of shops, offices and other departments.
- 3) To reduce the costs of freight shipment through the concentration within a single zone of all the incoming and outgoing trains, as well as of the shops, warehouses and all other departments related to freight operation.
- 4) To facilitate the urban growth of the City of Mexico, and of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, at present seriously impeded by numerous traversing railway tracks which will disappear with the new Terminal.
- 5) To help in the creation of a new industrial zone, wherein the factories that have been hitherto established along the existing railways in diverse sections of the Federal District may be eventually centered.

6) To increase the capacity in the receiving and dispatching of freight trains, and thus to cope with the growth in the volume of traffic ensuing from the country's accelerated economic development.

The Freight Terminal of the Valley of Mexico consists of the following units:

- 1) Freight Station, which comprises warehouses for merchandise.
- 2) Warehouses for the receipt and dispatching of local freight; offices of the Station Chief; loading and unloading platforms; market for produce; platforms for unloading automobiles, and special sections for the handling of carload shipments.
- 3) Customs Offices; fireproof warehouses for express shipments; spacious warehouses and quarters for the Post Office.
- 4) Station for the Presidential Train; service yards for passenger cars; repair shops for freight and passenger Diesel and steam locomotives.
- 5) Yards for reclassification, formation and dispatching of trains; yards for classification, and yards for receiving of trains.
- 6) Round House and shops for Diesel locomotives; supply warehouses for materials.

SHOPS

This great railway center contains, moreover, shops for heavy repairs of Diesel and steam locomotives, as well as for freight and passenger cars, comprised of the following units: repair shops for steam locomotives; those for passenger coaches, freight cars, gondolas, tank-cars; power house; foundry shops; warehouse for the concentration of materials; storage yard for oils and lubricants; offices of the Shop Superintendent; First-aid station; house for the General Storekeeper; that for the Master Mechanic of the Terminal; platform for car-washing.

The new Terminal is easily communicated with the city by means of appropriately located highways and streets.

The construction of this great terminal, initiated two years ago, has been entrusted to one of the best organized and most reputable building companies in Mexico—C.I.C. (Compañía Inmobiliaria y Constructora, S. A.) and is being carried out promptly on schedule.

The same company is carrying out the construction of the Passenger Terminal—likewise a project of gigantic proportions and unique in its unified architectural planning—which will provide an example for the world at large.

This briefly summarizes the splendid achievement of the National Railways—an achievement without parallel in Mexico's railway history—which definitely solved one of the gravest problems the country confronted six years ago.

One of the modern units comprising the Freight Terminal of the Valley of Mexico.



Patterns of an Old City

THE BRIEF AND FLEETING MOMENT

By Howard S. Phillips

RESTING in wicker chairs on the terrace of the inn, they could see the pyramid rising from the plain in a serrated triangle. Drenched in the sunset, glowing in a coral-pink shimmer under a sky that was a deep cobalt overhead and faded to pale gold at the horizon, a spectacular sky cluttered with cold-shaped opalescent clouds streaked with primrose, lilac and crimson, its presence—a weird fusion of fantasy and fact—impairing in their minds the tangibility of time and space, obfuscating their thoughts and denuding words of their usual quotidian meaning, impeded the flow of conversation. It rendered them distracted and mute.

They had inspected it at close range during the day; they had trailed around its base and climbed the almost perpendicular stairs inside it to the crypt which concealed the red tiger adorned with green jadeite disks, watching over the reclining god who stared at them whimsically over his shoulder; they had tramped over miles of this enigmatic ground, this vast cemetery of an undeciphered past, contemplating ruined temples, perusing the inscrutable message carved on endless blocks of stone, penetrating dank crepuscular chambers, resting at the bank of a pool whose stagnant waters concealed yet another millennial secret.

They had all walked closely around this pyramid, yet seeing it now at a distance looming over the cadent sunset, exerted upon them a new fascination. In each it brought out something that had not been perceived before. It made each aware of their common strangeness, of the ephemera and total inconsequence implicit in their casual wayside encounter, of the essential incommunicability even of the thoughts and feelings aroused by what they had seen. It made each withdraw into himself.

• • •

Only Mr. Latham among them seemed strangely unaffected by the surroundings. Amiable garrulous, exuding a blunt yet disarming vulgarity, he was the kind of person who seemed to regard good fellowship as an indispensable factor of normal human behavior, and in his case as an essential purpose in life. His appearance, his speech, his gestures, his coarse and obvious wit seemed to imply that he regarded himself as "a pretty nice kind of a guy who can get along with anybody anywhere." The enigma of Chichén was entirely and admittedly beyond his ken or curiosity, for he had explained to them earlier in the day that he did not come to Yucatán either as tourist or sight-seer, and that he had made this jaunt to the ruins merely as a little detour along a business journey. He came all the way from Providence by plane to Miami, Habana and Mérida, to arrange something that had to do with the financing of mahogany exports.

"A pretty nice town, this Mérida," he said. "Orderly and clean. Put did you take a look at all those runty little horses that pull those funny little cabs? They are a hundred years behind times. And what a little pep, a little getup and knowhow could do for this country! They've got everything here to set them up on the top of the world. The trouble is that they just never got next to themselves."

His trite comments, the banal prejudices he voiced with such flat assurance, elicited no reply from

his listeners; and yet their silence did not define reproach or boredom; they were in fact tacitly grateful for his monopolizing chatter, for while it held them together and preserved an atmosphere of sociability it relieved them of the need to talk. It was easy enough to follow his chatter while pursuing the thread of their own confused unuttered thoughts.

"That's the whole trouble," Mr. Latham continued. "They never got next to themselves."

• • •

To Mrs. Hathaway the blatant, rudely worded assertion seemed oddly expressive. It seemed to bear a strange unintended significance, that of a personal message. That is probably it, she thought. One must get next to one's self. That is probably what I am actually trying to do. I ran away from Roger, from all the beastliness, from all the sordid mess our life together has become, to get back to myself for a while, to see if there is yet something left in myself which can keep me going... or at least to gather sufficient strength to return and resume the beastliness and accept the situation with calm resignation... Maybe, if I can really get next to myself, I can still make him see that we have reached the dead end, that we are in a blind alley, and that the only way still open for us is backward to some new starting point. It is not hard to comprehend our problem, to trace its cause. It is plain enough. The children are grown and gone, and the void they left has never been filled. And while Roger desperately sought to fill this void, to escape from his loneliness, I failed him. The initial fault was mine. Fumbling in my own added void of changing life, pitifully helpless even to cope with my own ordeal, I was unable to guide him. I was unable to hold him, and he drifted away. But is it final? Is this the way it has to end?... No. Twenty-eight years is a long time. We have been married and lived that long together, and the intrusion of this young woman cannot erase our past. She cannot fill the void. A man, even at his age, can commit the gravest kind of folly and emerge from it unhurt. We are both lost in a blind alley, but we may yet find a way out. There might yet be something left in the wreckage—something from which we may rebuild anew...

And thinking thus she was suddenly startled by the realization that she was not entirely sunk in despair, that she was kindled by a reborn hope, that in some vague manner life still held a ray of promise.

• • •

"You can take it from me," Mr. Latham was saying. "Every country has plenty of opportunities, but people just can't sit for a thousand years and wait for something to happen. What's buried under ground is of no value till you dig it up."

Mr. Latham's final words re-echoed with arresting purport in Mrs. Barns' ears. Her eyes turned from the distant pyramid and became fixed on the man's large and obtusely amiable face, on the stubby bulbous nose and the large yellow teeth flashing inside his wide and flabby lips as if his palaver in some inadvertent clairvoyance had suddenly revealed a final and decisive truth, as if it pointed at an ultimate signal direction.

Continued on page 60



LITHOGRAPH.

By Roland Goodman.

Pito Pérez

(Continued from the September Number)

ONE indiscreet question, Pito Perez," I asked when we met again. "It is true that you know the inside of many jails?"

"Yes, it is true. I know several, and I am not ashamed to confess it. I've been in jail because of drunkenness and mischief; but I have never killed anybody, nor have I committed those crimes on which the rich thrive and the poor spend long years in prison. For a rich man may kill and remain hidden, while his money breaks laws and softens wills; a rich man may commit a crime and then bring to bear such proofs of innocence that, in the final reckoning, he alone appears to have been cheated and slandered.

"I have never yet had the good fortune to be put in one of those modern jails which, they tell me, are all comfort and refined manners; where the prisoners wear elegant uniforms—the kind that have now become stylish outside the prisons as sleeping-garments and are called pajamas.

"In the jails of the villages I have found honorable and gentlemanly citizens, seized as substitutes for persons who are still enjoying complete liberty. A childish spirit rules them, prompting them to make water in their companions' shoes, by way of innocent sport. Still, there are generous feelings. Nobody dies of hunger, even when the government cuts

off the prisoners' rations. Those who receive food from home share it with those who have none. What banquets I have had by accepting from my fellows a plate of rice or a stuffed pepper in exchange for writing a letter or for an affectionate slap on the back!

"Life in our jails has a certain family warmth, something of a religious brotherhood, together with all the pacts and countersigns of secret societies.

"In the morning sessions, at the hour of the general delousing, you take the sun, plan your defenses, your alibis, come to an agreement about your business, and write your letters for the outside. I have been obliged to act as amanuensis for hundreds of prisoners: my pen-points were eyes to weep for loneliness, mouths to voice grievances, the messengers of remembrance for unfortunate mothers, wives, or children.

"After food—I could hardly say after dinner—politics are discussed and the portraits of the leading authorities are retouched, not omitting any familiar details.

"In the afternoon, at the sad hour of sunset, when the bars look like crosses bloodied by the criminal hand of twilight, the souls of the prisoners are moved

By Ruben Romero

by the sight of the landscape and a chorus of song comes forth, repeated like a psalm and echoed through the air like a cry of pain.

"The nights come saddled with obscene images, with sensual reminiscences, with lewd tales. The prisoners fabricate lies, under the illusion that their hearers believe them; and they are of prodigious bouts and of invincible swords wielded on imaginary fields of love. But those who listen, awaiting their turn to dream aloud, smile incredulously, knowing that such things are told merely as a stimulant for the solitary alleviation of the body.

"One by one I remember the jail's I have known, and I pride myself upon having made many good friends within them.

"I was given eight days for ringing the bells of my parish to welcome my own return to my town with a bowler hat, a cane, and a new suit.

"Because in the populous city of Tancitaro I shouted, when I was drunk, 'Death to the Priest Hidalgo!' they gave me fifteen days. I couldn't convince the authorities that my cry had had no influence on the death of the illustrious man who had been shot once and for all a century before I made my proclamation.

"For celebrating the Panathenic Festival—that is to say, for walking the streets of Luroga wrapped in a sheet and crowned with flowers like a real Athenian—they condemned me to sweep the square for eight days; and to haryl labor for another eight, simply for having expressed my wish for a revolution. I desired, merely that the law of Thales might be applied to the mayor to the end that he might be forced to sweep the whole town with some feathers tied to his head by way of a broom. No headress could be more suitable to him, savage that he was.

"For setting myself up as a redeemer of oaths, I was given a month in jail. I will explain the matter to you, for I read a question in your eyes:

"A muleteer, a neighbor of mine, was the owner of a little burro which he had beaten half to death. Touched by the unhappy lot of the poor animal I decided to free it from its hard servitude. To this end I begged its master to lend it to me for a trip to Patzenaro. As soon as we were on the main road, I said to the humble donkey, 'The only way I can change your luck is to let you go with the first man who comes by.' The burro agreed, with, a resounding bray, and I sold him to some muleteers for twelve pesos without a proper bill of sale.

"When, upon my return to Santa Clara, the cruel owner asked me for the burro I answered him, 'I must tell you that the poor animal died on you.' But the first lie led to more and more stories and inquiries, until at last they put me in jail for an alleged theft.

"I went to the village of Opopeo to give some spiritual exercises, suitably dressed in a soutane belonging to my brother Joaquin. My worthy aim was to collect alms for the missions in Japan. There I tried my persuasive eloquence for the benefit of the stray lambs, moved only by the desire to do good. For my generosity I was given a month in jail and had to return all the collections immediately.

"My rosaries to the Virgin Mother proved fruitless; my sermons were futile. And take note of this irritating consideration: by way of annotating the words of Jesus, who said: 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!' Those who came were the gendarmes, who yanked me down from the pulpit without the slightest respect for my religious garb. Thus is virtue crushed in this world....

"Once upon a time, with Jesús, the baker, I agreed

to exchange a cock for a hen. I brought him my cock, collected the hen, and received five days in jail because I ate the bird in a mole sauce.

"But, Pito Perez, such a punishment seems most unjust, for I don't see the slightest fraud in what you did.

"That's what I think. I must explain how the thing worked:

"I had heard Jesús, the baker, say that he had many hens and that he needed a rooster to serve the harem. When I offered him one of my cocks in exchange for a hen, he accepted without asking for a personal description of the unknown Don Juan with his feathered cape and slouch hat. The only question he asked was whether the thing could crow, to which I answered yes. At midnight sharp I took my whistle and went to the lane where Jesús lived. I stood near the door, threshing out the best of my repertoire: popular songs, a piece of selected music, and the Qui Tollis from Mercadante's Mass.

"Some would-be night hawks came through the street, stopped to listen, and then asserted that the Qui Tollis I was playing was 'Perjury' by Lerdo de Tejada.

"I put away my instrument, jumped over the wall of Jesús yard, seized the first sleeping hen that came to hand, and leaped into the street again with the chicken tight in my arms.

"As a visiting card I left this song for the baker:

'My namesake, I bid you "so long"!
I'll turn the corner, and then
You'll hear no more my gallant crow,
Now that I've won my hen.

"Jesús maintained that I had not legally carried out my part of the bargain and the judge ordered me to return the hen, taking no account of my crowing.

* * *

"Another time, while I was having a bite to eat in a doorway in Jiquilpan, I said aloud that there was no water in that town, consequently they cooked with aguardiente and washed their hands in beer. They put me in jail for that. But it happened that when my crime was related to the prefect of police—a certain Don Enrique Forias and a very gentlemanly person—he exclaimed, bursting out laughing: "That's a good one, my friend!" And he ordered my immediate release.

"From the jail of Yurira I remember a tragic episode—one of those which are utilized by writers of those novels which are nowadays called psychoanalytical, but which were formerly called tales of the double cross.

"I was wandering through the villages and ranches in that section, begging alms from the Christian souls for the construction of a temple on Mount Lebanon, when in Yurira in the State of Guanajuato I was detained because the mayor had received a notice reading thus:

Apprehend Jesús Perez Gaona, a fraudulent missionary disguised as a Carmelite monk. Personal description: He answers to the name of Pito Perez.

R. ITURBIDE
Mayor of Morelia

"In the Yurira jail I met a prisoner who was feared by the others for his violent and revengeful nature. His name was Rosendo. The author of many bloody crimes, he was now serving a term for the murder of a man who had dared to charge him some twenty cents

for pasturing his cows. But what surprised everybody was the behavior of the dead man's widow. She was a quiet, humble woman whom I saw at the bars day after day, bringing food to Rosendo.

The other prisoners told me her story:

A short time after the crime she had appeared at the jail as if in gratitude to the murderer. For two years she worked to support the prisoner. In the beginning he seemed to suspect such strange conduct; but her perseverance and her tenderness succeeded in removing all his misgivings. Vain like all men, he accepted the state of affairs, explaining them to himself in this way: "This unfortunate woman must have suffered a great deal while living with the deceased, may he rest in peace, and is thankful to me because I put an end to her misery with one shot."

While I was still in that jail, Rosendo arranged to be released on parole. His champion came to meet him. Gathered at the bars, we saw Apollinaria in her red percale dress and her blue shawl with the white dots draped over her bosom. She waited faithfully as though Rosendo were her husband. From his hands she took his bed-roll, and they started to walk toward her house in the most natural way in the world.

She offered him a good meal, and afterward her humble but alluring bed. She allowed herself to be led to it without haste or uneasiness. A sweet light beamed from her eyes and there was a sad smile on her lips. They closed the doors and there reigned that darkness which is penetrated only by the blindfolded god.

Suddenly a terrible cry came from the house, startling the neighbors.

"What has happened? Where did that horrible scream come from?"

At the very moment when Rosendo shuddered with the tremor of the orgasm, the woman had cautiously opened a razor and with one stroke she severed the man's victorious organs. The police found him naked and dead. Apollinaria was looking at him with that sweet light streaming from her eyes.

"I have kept the promise I made to my dead husband!" she exclaimed serenely. "You can take me now."

I have visited many jails for being a drunkard, a musician, a missionary, and once for being a fool. This is the only stain on my conscience.

* * *

I arrived in Ario de Rosales, looking for work. I offered myself as a druggist, a barber, a sacristan. I made the rounds of the courts to see whether anyone needed any summons served. All in vain. Either my person did not inspire confidence at first sight, or the village had adopted the motto: "Ario for the Aryans."

Mr. Medal, the proprietor of a drugstore, was also the owner of a billiard hall, and I went there while waiting for something to turn up, something

that might yield me a peso. Now, I'm a good billiard player—one of those who can get the balls all together in one corner of the table and then make shots of thirty, meanwhile assuring everybody that I have never touched a cue before.

"Listen," the owner of the drugstore said to me. "Are you the one who came to me this morning looking for work? Well, if you know how to write and can show me a sample, I can give you a job."

"I have written every kind of letter and I have read the Spanish-American Illustration. Maybe this will give you an idea of what I am worth."

"Have you ever had any journalistic experience?"

"I've had a free subscription to the Morelia Lotus Flower."

"Well, I'll give you two pesos a day for acting as the editor manager of a fortnightly paper which I get out every three months. Tomorrow morning I'm publishing the second number; so tell me if that suits you."

"I accept," I answered.

On the following day I returned to the drugstore to get my instructions from my new employer. He gave me my two pesos in advance, as we had agreed, and he ordered me to get acquainted with the town so I could scak myself, as he said, in the needs of the people. After learning the streets I went to install myself on a bench in the square. A few minutes later the chief of police arrived to say that the political boss wanted to see me.

At his office the boss, shaking a newspaper in his hand, began to question me:

"Are you responsible for this lampoon?"

"And for the Admor as well," I told him.

"You scoundrel! Are you trying to be a clown too? Off to jail you go, but not until you've swallowed this sheet in my presence."

I did, in fact, eat the newspaper, chewing it appreciatively as though I were enjoying a delicious meal.

Later I learned how the druggist had made use of me to escape certain responsibilities of his own. In that particular issue, among other compliments, he had called the political boss a murderer and a thief. All that for the promise of two pesos a day! I never again saw so much as the milling on a coin, a just punishment for my stupidity.

* * *

Pito Perez never came again to the tower. He left his story unfinished, perhaps because he was busy looking into the mouths of too many bottles, hoping to find in their depths a freer and more generous world. Would he surprise it in the clarity of wine? Perhaps! We saw him making the rounds of the streets, his shoes in tatters and his dirty hair crowned with flowers.

(To be concluded in the November Number)

Packet of Seed

By Inez George Gridley

THIS wrinkled seed I hold in my hand
Is faith in the future, promise and hope,
Gardens and forests, flowers and fruit,
Food for the soul in an envelope.

And all the disaster that cynics cried,
And all of the ruin wise men decreed,
Explosion and earthquake, are quieted
By the soundless shout of the bursting seed!



OIL

By Dora Lust.

Mexico for the Gourmet

By Jean de Campo

MEXICO is generally regarded as a land of romantic values for the tourist, a country of delightful anachronisms offering endless inspiration to the artist, and a treasure trove for the historian, the anthropologist, and archaeologist. But it is rarely, if ever, referred to as the objective of the gourmet... that gastronomic expert with the super-sensitive taste buds. And this little oversight renders a great injustice to the excellence of the Mexican cuisine.

Much of the erroneous concept concerning the Mexican menu is based upon a popular delusion, perhaps cinema-inspired, that frioles, tamales, tortillas, and love... all highly seasoned and fiery hot... represent the preferred diet of the Mexicans. And the Mexicans, being an innately courteous people, must occasionally wonder why visitors feel qualified to speak with authority on the Mexican cuisine, when their personal experience is frequently limited to a casual acquaintance with second-rate hotel or restaurant cooking... a

depressingly low level of culinary genius in almost any country.

A national cuisine represents the skilled and artful preparation of basic raw foods in accordance with the special or peculiar habits, needs, and tastes of its people. Climate, crops, temperament, race and religion influence eating habits; and conquest and culture play their share in the development of taste. For example, maize has been a staple food of the Mexican people for centuries. The present day tortillas differ little, if at all, from those eaten by the Aztecs; and corn is utilized in innumerable ways in their daily menu. The exact moment when the first frioles were cooked and eaten, would be difficult to gauge, but they still retain an important place in two out of the three meals a day in Mexican families. These hardy individualists of the culinary world, however, are by no means the exclusive claimants to the Hall of Fame as representatives of the Mexican gastronomical genius.

Public eating places in all countries enter to what they conceive of as the public's taste, and this is not always conducive to a real or lasting appreciation of any national cuisine. Even in France, the Ultima Thule of the gourmet, there is a wide gulf between the professional specialties of famed restaurants, and the delicious well-balanced meals prepared and enjoyed by the average family. To the French, the art of cooking has always appealed as an exact science of which everyone understands something and feels pride in his knowledge. Undoubtedly this explains their easy superiority in an art which is too often neglected, or given too casual consideration in other countries. Actually it is not upon the genius of an individual chef, however famous, that the culinary renown of a nation depends, but upon the cumulative excellence of generations of intelligent and skilled home cooks.

For this reason the average visitor to Mexico, however well intentioned, is hardly equipped to pass final judgment upon its national cuisine. Such appraisal is more in the province of the permanent residents.

Basically, Mexico has everything to offer in the food line that we find in the United States. In addition, there are numerous fruits, vegetables, fish, game, herbs and other delicacies which upon acquaintance prove excellent candidates for a permanent place on our own menu. In the big city markets of Mexico, everything from soup to nuts can be found, and the new Norte-Americano style Super-Mercados fascinate the Mexican housewife as much as the old-style Mexican markets, with their heterogeneous collections from the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms in delightful and noisy juxtaposition, charm the eyes and ears of their North American sisters.

* * *

To a vegetarian, the markets appear as a veritable paradise. The entire Who's Who of the vegetable world can be found, heaped in meticulous order, spic and span, on stall after stall; and such marketing is an experience pleasantly reminiscent of pre-war Paris. But with a subtle difference which would be remarked only by the initiated. In Mexico, it is not mandatory, when selecting two or more heads of lettuce, to purchase a bad head with the good.

The Mexican is by temperament friendly and generous, and although naturally interested in a slightly profitable transaction... for after all the Mexican don't live on love... he also manifests a genuine concern in the customer's ultimate satisfaction and good will. Marketing in Mexico is, therefore, not so much a battle of wits, as an agreeable solution by two or more individuals of the universal problem of supply and demand.

While even an artist would revel in the colorful displays of the vegetable stalls, it is to the fruit sellers that most Northerners turn with greatest pleasure. These stalls display artistically woven baskets filled with fragrant red strawberries and raspberries... the luscious descendants of Peruvian ancestors; carefully stacked papayas, mameys, and the delectable cherimoya, which is shaped like a huge green strawberry, and possesses the rare flavor combination of the pineapple and banana. This Mexican beauty is now making her debut in the luxury markets in the States, and will undoubtedly become the darling of the epicure.

Bananas are found in bunches of red, gold, and green, suiting every purse and purpose. Figs are of super-size and sweetness, and those from the State of Sonora rival the figs of Smyrna. Dates are tender, and melt on the tongue like honey. And that incomparable exquisite of the tropics, the mango, appears in every size and variety, of which the famed Manila mango is easily the best. Its deep golden color, but-

ter-like texture, and superb flavor are never to be forgotten. Peaches, pears, and apples; pineapples of such size that three fill a large crate, and superior even to the suggestion of sugar; grapes of every color and size and flavor, comparing favorably with the finest in any land. And of course an abundance of citrus fruits—oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, and limes.

It is easily seen that the most exacting gourmet might confine his diet to fruits and vegetables without undue suffering; but it is not necessary thus to limit one's menu, for fish, meat, and poultry are plentiful and of excellent quality.

* * *

The delicate fine-flavored meat of the whitefish from Patzcuaro has no need to tremble at comparison with the internationally famous sole. And *pescado blanco en aceite* is a regional specialty which yields no honors to sole Marguery. Sardines of majestic size and impressive flavor, mackerel, tuna, and abalone from Baja California; swordfish, *totoaba* (a superb white bass), *cabrillo*, and fat oysters from Guaymas. The list is impressive. It includes *pompano*, the gourmet's darling; and *pargo lisa*, and *mero* from Mazatlán, share fame with its superb stretches of palm-dotted beaches.

The worthy citizens of Vera Cruz wear a smug expression, due, no doubt, to the fact that their menu includes a crustacean delicacy whose flavor, tenderness, and jumbo size render all competition futile. The Mexican fashion of serving shrimps, boiled but still enclosed in armor, their accusing eyes merely dulled by a cruel fate, is rather a shock to the unsuspecting American. But the disagreeable task of disarming the coral beauties is more than compensated by the exquisite pleasure of dipping them into a sauce made of butter, melted in a pottery cooking dish—a *cazuela*, to be exact, which has been rubbed well with a kernel of garlic... then seasoned with salt, freshly ground black pepper, and, as the experts say, a soupçon of *oregano*—the fresh variety. The resulting tidbit should be popped expertly into the mouth and a rapid and complete conversion from *shrimpa Creole* to Mexican is guaranteed.

The preparation of meats in the Mexican kitchen is infinitely painstaking. Steaks and chops, as we know them, are not familiar fare in Mexican homes where roasts and ragoûts are preferred. Just as the French excel in soups and ragoûts, so does the Mexican cuisine display admirable excellence in this department of cookery which demands the utmost patience in preparation and consummate skill in seasoning.

Poultry plays an important part in the Mexican menu, and the *guajalote*, or turkey, is not only the national bird of Mexico, but the national dish for festive occasions. The Mexicans, for reasons lost in a romantic legend, smother their turkey with a sauce—mole. In our opinion, this particular sauce typifies the Mexican passionate love of detail and utter disregard of time. In its preparation, practically every ingredient obtainable is utilized, and the better part of a day consumed. The result is smooth and superbly rich, but disastrously clogging to the low-g geared American digestion.

Wild ducks and pigeons are favorite delicacies, and justifiably so, for they are full-breasted and flavoursome, and the Mexicans prepare them with skill. Roast pigeon, basted with butter and red wine, and served with a sauce to which slivers of green olives and almonds add a decidedly sophisticated air, should appease the most skeptical gourmet. *Tripa con salsa de almendra*, and *rinones en vino blanco* are two specialties of the Mexican cuisine which indicate an undeniable *savoir faire* in matters gastronomical.

The Mexican sweet-tooth is gargantuan. Pastelinas dot cities and towns, and where such luxuries are unknown, sucking a piece of sugar cane is resorted to with apparently satisfactory results. From the rich pan dulce served with one's morning cafe con leche, to the famed Polvorones accompanying the fruit compote which is a favored dessert for the evening meal, the day is punctuated with sweet tidbits. The candies of Guadalajara are famous; and Monterrey is remembered by the most casual tourist for the tantalizing fragrance of caramelized sugar and pecans simmering in brown cazuelas on portable charcoal stoves. It is a delicious line type of candy, although much richer in flavor.

The chocolate enthusiast would do well to go to Mexico, where, since the days of the Aztecs, the preparation of chocolate has been a fine art. When Mexico was a colony of Spain, the still famous cocoa of Soconusco was reserved for the exclusive use of the Spanish royal family. And the fine rich-flavored chocolate de metate from Morélia, when prepared according to the Mexican custom, produces a velvet smooth beverage with a soothing potency which pushes the Anglo Saxon dish of tea into the shade, where we suspect it has long been overdue.

Mexican coffee occupies a special niche of excellence. It is undoubtedly the much-famed elixir of the gods. It is grown in the States of Chiapas, Nayarit, Puebla, Michoacán, Veracruz, and Tabasco. The variety grown in the district of Compostela, in the southern part of Nayarit, had long been regarded as superior, and before the war was sent to the markets of Germany. This probably explains the superb coffee so generally obtainable in the pre-war Germany, and also the intense interest in Mexico evinced by most Germans. Our modest Mexican brother has had a monopoly on a coffee, which for aroma, texture, flavor and impact is without a peer. It is not surprising that the hour reserved for cocktails and dancing in the States, is devoted to the cult of coffee arabica and conversation in Mexico.

Out of these raw materials so bountifully displayed in markets, utilized with imagination tempered by discretion, and prepared with skill, has thus evolved what is known as the Mexican cuisine. The Spanish

influence is, of course, predominant, and there is more than a hint of French heritage from the brief sojourn of Maximilian. But the similarity is not sufficient to rob Mexican food of its distinctive texture and flavor. Patience, a prime requisite in the successful practice of fine cooking, is a quality generously possessed by the Mexicans who do not hesitate to devote half a day to the deliberate painstaking preparation of a ragout, or estofado. And their vegetable dishes and salads reveal the same imagination and artistry familiar to us in the French cuisine.

Soups both liquid and dry, are varied in flavor and formula, and are embellished by such tempting accessories as tiny dumpling light as foam, pancake cylinders filled with a highly seasoned minced chicken, exquisitely shaped tiny custards, and miniature potato balls of the consistency of a feather.

Eggs have achieved a new glamor under Mexican patronage. Poultry and fish appear in familiar form, but with new and intriguing flavors, due in no small part to the judicious use of various herbs. It requires almost an M. A. degree in the Art of Cooking merely to recognize the innumerable varieties of chili peppers and herbs, and the least error in judgment can ruin the flavor of the most carefully prepared dish. The Mexican housewife generally leaves the selection and use of seasonings to her trusted cocinera.

Contrary to the popular belief of foreigners, good Mexican cooking is not necessarily hot. Their hot sauces are usually served separately at the table, to be added to the food as each individual desires. Not all Mexicans have Johns-Manville interiors!

Obviously the Mexican menu adds up to a satisfactory answer; even without mention of the popular tacos, the famous tamales, and the ubiquitous frijoles. It presents ample evidence that the Mexican cuisine is a well established institution, founded upon strongly entrenched native traditions of food values, and a commendable individuality of taste, but that it has not hesitated to adopt for its own use and obvious enhancement, such methods practiced in other national cuisines as are compatible with the preferences and needs of its own people. The result is a national cuisine of variety and excellence, well qualified to win the gourmet's seal of approval.

Emerald Moment

By David Morton

THE moment, here, is green—

And the chameleon mind,

Could it be clearly seen

Through what it hides behind,

The mind, itself, were green;

And the words, the quick words darting,

Could they be seen,

Were birds, there, meeting and parting,

Among the green.

Watch Your Language

By N. Pelham Wright

EVERYONE HAS HEARD the post-prandial, and possibly apocryphal, story about the well-intentioned Guatemalan who was thrown out of a Havana restaurant for using insulting language when he thought he was ordering a slice of pawpaw. Or the one about the Mexican and Chilean diplomats who fought a duel over what turned out to be a basic difference in meaning of a word common to their two vocabularies. Both are typical incidents born of the Spanish in use between California and Patagonia.

Most people familiar with more than one country of Spanish America speedily discover that expressions used in one may not be current or perhaps carry a totally different connotation in others. Thus words one "simply must not use" in country A may be quite innocuous in country B. If you would avoid offending, then, in the Spanish speaking countries of America, choose your words with circumspection.

It almost seems as if some diabolical force were at work to confuse the newcomer. Why, for example, should that ubiquitous figure in all Spanish American countries, the boothblack, be called a *limpiabotas* all over the North, an *embolador* in Colombia, a *lustrador* or *lustrabotas* in the South, and doubtless other variations in between? For that matter, why on earth should the first words of a telephone conversation vary in almost every country? On picking up the receiver in Mexico, one normally answers with a questioning "¿Bueno?" or possibly "¿Quién habla?" In Colombia the formula invariably is "¿A ver?" In Central America and parts of Chile it is usually "¡Hola!"; in Argentina, "¡Hola!"; and in Peru and Uruguay, "¡Olé!", as if one were at the bullfight. And why should the lavatory be tagged with so many different names? We have encountered *retrete*, *excusado*, *toilette*, *W. C.*, *baño*—even *letrina*, *mingitorio*, and *inodoro*, and most of these terms appear to be allocated on a national basis.

How did the noble language of Castile become so diversified in something less than 450 years? Basically, the factors universally responsible for the formation of dialects are at play here, even though no

form of Spanish spoken in America can be termed a dialect of Castilian. The similarity is too close, and, in any case, we are concerned here with regional vocabularies, intonations, and expression, rather than with structure.

The profusion of dialects in a small, relatively old, highly-developed country like England is surprising considering the long-established and perfectly adequate communications system and the lack of isolation, which make for standardization rather than divergence of speech. In Latin America, however, the isolation of communities—and the enormous distances between—until recently created ideal conditions for a generally increasing divergence of spoken Spanish. This tendency was accentuated in some regions by the numerous Indian languages, for many Indian nouns (mainly generic names) have of course been absorbed into the vocabularies of some parts of the continent.

But the divergence of speech has not marched with national frontiers. There may well be a standard form of Spanish spoken by everyone in a small country like El Salvador (the only difference there being one of educational levels), but this does not apply to lands like Mexico, Argentina, or Colombia. In Mexico intonation and cadence largely depend on the proportion of Indian blood in the speaker; the average porteño or port-dweller of Buenos Aires certainly does not talk like the provincial *catamarqueño*; the same contrast applies to the *bogotano*, 8,000 feet up in the Andes, and the denizen of Cartagena, that swell-



tering old city down on Colombia's Caribbean coast. Bogotá claims to speak the "purest" Spanish in America, while Cartagena's so-called costeño speech must be frankly termed lazy and slipshod. Climate definitely influences speech in any part of the world, and Spanish America's great climate contrasts have certainly left their mark.

Of late, improvement in national and international communications and the reduction of distances by airplane and radio should logically bring with them a brake to regionalism in speech. There is reason to believe that this is now beginning in Spanish America, though the evolution will certainly be slow and labored. The word "television" will without doubt be *televisión* in every Spanish-speaking country; yet when not many decades ago such commodities as rubber tires, refrigerators, and gasoline became part of the Spanish vocabulary, there was apparently no attempt whatever at standardization. So for tires we now have, variously, *gomas* or *neumáticos* in the River Plate countries; *llantas* in Mexico, Peru, and Chile; *cubiertas*, also in Chile; and *cauchos* in Venezuela. The general term *refrigeradores* becomes *neveras* in Colombia, *heladeras* in Argentina, and *fridgieres* in Uruguay. And *gasolina*, in the North and in Peru, is *nafta* in Venezuela and the River Plate countries, and *benzina* in Chile. Similarly, the various designations for automobiles, trucks, streetcars, buses, and horsedrawn carts are extremely confusing. Just why all this happened seems worth investigating.

For the etymologist, at least, the majority of differences in vocabulary and expression have come about naturally and explicable, and do not look like conscious attempts to be different. They seem to fall into a number of categories.

First, there are the expressions and vocabulary implanted at the outset from some particular region of Spain, which have become an inherent part of the speech of a geographically isolated region. If we go right back to the conquest, we find, for example, that a high percentage of the followers of Hernán Cortés were men from Andalucía, so the Spanish first heard in Mexico and parts of Central America must have had a strong sixteenth-century Andalusian timbre. On the other hand, the colonists of Veragua—now Costa Rica—hailed almost entirely from Galicia. Isthmus geography obliged these gallegos and their descendants to live in isolation during the whole colonial period (and, indeed, after it ended). As the gallego speech is very different from that of other regions of Spain (even considered a dialect by some), it is logical that Costa Rican Spanish contains many strictly local words and expressions. In fact, about half a century ago, a fat dictionary of purely Costa Rican idioms and vocabulary was published. The same thing also applies to Argentina. There is no doubt, then, that in the sixteenth century the regional origins of the first Spaniards to reach America insured a basic divergence of speech among the different groups of settlers all over the continent, though the contrasts may have been less strong at the outset than in Mexico and Costa Rica.

Secondly, some words and expressions have evolved naturally since the conquest, as happens in any living language, but have remained regional owing to lack of easy communication with neighboring areas. The informal modes of address, which vary a good deal from country to country, can presumably fall under either of these headings. For example, Mexico uses the *tú* form and looks down her nose at *vos*; next door in Guatemala—and in Argentina, at the other end of the continent—this *vos* is widely used, with a more or less corrupted verb form. It is these

combinations that are so difficult for foreigners to grasp.

Thirdly, words of foreign and other influences from abroad have been adapted to local vocabularies. The most obvious examples are automobile technicalities in Mexico, where terms from the United States have been adopted instead of the Castilian equivalent. Or again, in Argentine Spanish, and Italian influence crops up in pronunciation and in some words, along with others from the French (*la boîte*, *el placard*, *el chalet*, *el garage* with soft second *g*), and from the English (*el living*, *el bife*, *la broadcasting*, *el ice-cream*, and so on). Uruguay seems to have adopted a few of her own—notably *la whiskiería* to signify a bar or drinking place.

Finally, the names of animals, birds, plants, fruits, vegetables, implements, and so on, taken from Indian languages that were themselves regionally limited. This is particularly noticeable in Mexico, Central America, Peru, and Paraguay, and all areas where Indians of a high cultural level were encountered by the Spaniards. The Aztecs of Mexico and the Guaranis of Paraguay to mention only two civilizations, knew the most about natural history—more so, in fact, than the whites who supplanted them. The conquistadors and colonists, meeting for the first time a fauna and flora unknown to them, understandably adopted many Aztec and Guaraní names to describe nature. Some are now used in areas wider than those inhabited by the people who gave them. Aztec terminology is found all over Mexico and through much of Central America. The black and turkey vultures (usually wrongly called "buzzards" in English) are *zopilotes* (from the Aztec *tsopilotl*) as far south as Panama, becoming *gallinazos* when one reaches Colombia. The Guaraní word *ñandú*, meaning the South American ostrich or rhea, is used today as far south as Patagonia. The most interesting case we have come across is the use of the Aztec word *camote* (for the sweet potato) as far away from Mexico as Peru.

* * *

The nomenclature of natural things in Spanish America, whether Indian names are involved or not, is a nightmare both for the housewife who must buy things to eat in a new country and for the nature-lover trying to focus the fauna and flora in their proper perspective. There are doubtless excellent explanation for it all, but one cannot help puzzling over why the papaya of Mexico, Chile, and Central America should be *fruta de bomba* in Cuba and *manón* in Paraguay. Why does the Mexican *chícharo* (pea) become *arveja* in Chile and Argentina, and *guisante* (the real Castilian word) only in Colombia? And the green-bean, *poroto verde* in Chile, *chaucha* in Argentina, *ejote* in Mexico, *vainita* in Peru, and *judía* (again Castilian) in Colombia? Again, why does the *aguacate* (avocado) of the North become *palta* in the South?

It is the same with flowers, and worse with fish and crustaceans. Personally we should not care to attempt to define exactly *langostas*, *langostinos*, *camarones*, *cangrejos de río*, *gambas*, or *cigalas* in any given country, but the difficulty here is intensified because the crustacea of one country are not exactly the same as those of the next. No attempt is made to relate a given name to a given type, as the Indians did, so varying species are given the same name and the same species different names.

This sort of thing is reflected right through the plant and animal worlds. In a misguided moment, we once undertook a study of the popular names for the members of the parrot tribe in Mexico and Central America. The results were chaotic. Twenty-eight

species were involved, and we discovered about 90 different names for them in six republics. Two or more would have the same name in one country, different ones would have that name in the next, while still others would have five different names in one country and no name at all in the next.

The carnivorous animal we call "grison," or "tayra," has a different name in almost every country. In northern Argentina it is *hurón*, in Costa Rica *cholomuco*, and in Guatemala and parts of Mexico *perico ligero*, which in Costa Rica means the two-toed sloth. The word *comadreja*, which correctly means some form of weasel or stoat, is applied in Argentina to the Azara's opossum (*Didelphis*). The latter, in Costa Rica, is *zorro pelón* (literally, "hairless fox," which presumably applies to its bare tail), and Costa Rica's foxes are called *tigrillos*. Nearly everywhere else foxes are called *zorros* or *zorras*, and *tigrillo* normally refers to members of the cat family, particularly the ocelot. That these confusing tendencies are not limited to Central America is proved by the fact that the hordes of Fuegian geese that have justified Tierra del Fuego's poetical title, "the land of geese and wind," are known there as *avutardas*, which, in Castilian, means the big running bird we call "bustard."

It falls to the lot of Argentina, in many ways the most advanced country of Spanish America, to be first in the development of language. In the United States, English is evolving faster than in Britain, and new words and expressions are constantly being coined to find a permanent place in the language. A fair analogy is the relation between Argentine Spanish and Castilian, and perhaps, to a lesser ex-

tent, that between Argentine Spanish and the Spanish in the rest of America. A glance at shop signs in any Argentine city illustrates what we mean. Such items as *aeromodetismo*, *oxigenoterapia*, and *microteca* (for a small display-stand for books on sale), strike us as peculiarly Argentine in concept, not to mention the little man selling soda-water in our Buenos Aires suburb, who is called *el sodero*. The most arresting Argentine advertising copy has a slickness, an agility, a striving after fresh shades of meaning and new trains of thought such as we have seen nowhere else in Spanish. Despite the airplane and the radio, the difference between British and American English seems to be increasing, and the same may perhaps be said of Argentine Spanish and *castellano* or pure *bogotano*.

Last April the First Congress of Spanish Language Academies that met in Mexico City deliberated, among other things, on the possibilities of standardizing the Spanish spoken in America. Thus it is apparent that some thinking Latin Americans feel it is high time to do something about the chaotic state of linguistic affairs in their continent.

One project that could be expected to appeal to many people, not only to meticulous etymologists or natural history enthusiasts, but to anyone crossing a Spanish-American frontier and anxious not to meter *la pata* on the other side, would be the compilation of an exhaustive comparative dictionary of Spanish American regionalisms. But compilers for such a monumental work would be hard to come by. And one fears that the size of the tome would prevent it from accompanying many travelers across the borders.

Pride's House

By Walte S. Richardson

THROUGHOUT the years of disciplined forgetting

I'll build a house that you can never find,
And safely there I'll harbor my regretting
Behind the bricks of pride that guard the mind.

No room will know your voice; no hidden light
Reflect the image of your face. No hall
Will hold the echo of your step, nor bright
Quick laughter find its way across my wall.

Resolute I shall stand against the wind
Whose arrows of remembrance pierce the heart,
Relying on stark wisdom to the end
To keep this secret and your world apart.

Yet higher than my reach will shine a light
If ever you should choose to come by night.



PORTRAIT OF A BOY. OIL.

By Pepe Romero.

Pepe Romero

By Guillermo Rivas

DURING the twenty-eight years I have been conducting this monthly commentary on the evolution of Mexican art I have had an occasional gratifying experience of introducing to my readers the work of some new talent which in my opinion bore a degree of valid promise and which the course of time rewarded with fulfillment. I have, in other words, enjoyed an occasional satisfaction of having, so to speak, picked a winner.

In presenting the work of such aspiring talents I have been always guided by the notion that the true vitality of art on the whole is preserved not so much through the efforts of recognized professionals as through the more venturesome strivings of amateurs. Hence, in attempting to analyze the proven or latent values in the work of an amateur painter I usually begin by estimating the extent of its independence from conventional or professional influence, that is to say, the note of authentic personality it might reveal.

Obviously, since all art represents an evolution stemming from foregone art, absolute independence in art is non-existent. Hence the term personality essentially defines a harmonious eclectic assimilation of foregone influence, the capacity to achieve a personal idiom from the universal language of art. When in the work of an amateur I find an assertion of such personality—which is a rare find indeed—I behold in it a valid promise.

It is this kind of promise that I find in the paintings of Pepe Romero. The personal assertion, moreover, is in his case not the result of studious absorption or conscious eclecticism, for Romero is an entirely self-taught painter whose expression is intuitive and spontaneous. It is the creative utterance of a man who says what he wants to say in the only way he can say it.

This, of course, is a singular quality in art; though what actually makes his art valuable is the fact that what he says and how he says it is arresting and significant. For with Romero painting is not merely an agreeable pastime; it defines a creative compulsion, a necessary outlet for an innate need. Endowed with superabundant energy, Romero, a newspaperman by profession, who writes a pungent daily column for the local English language paper "The News," and who, among other things, has just finished the bulky manuscript of a book, titled "The Mexican Jumping Bean," which is to be published in forthcoming months, turns from his typewriter to his easel as a perfectly normal and necessary process. The two mediums of expression consistently supplement each other: both represent a probing of reality and a succinct and first-hand transcription.

And it is probably due to the reason that Romero gathers his material for writing largely in the course of nocturnal perambulations, and that there is a noctambulist trait in his nature, that his painting has a quality of night rather than daytime. His eyes seem to perceive with greater clarity what in a sudden dazzling flash is projected in the adumbration of night. There is a neon-like glitter in the spurge of his color and his visions are sharp and fleeting glimpses of reality rather than a detailed display. These glimpses, however, are not solely of the dazzling surface; they bear the substance of coruscating truth. His lush and vigorous brush-strokes voice an immediate impact; they are profoundly articulate.

The personality revealed in his work defies conventional classification. He does not paint like anyone else in our midst because, as I have said, he became a painter not through conscious emulation but through a purely spontaneous impulse. His work bears a cosmopolitan note because he is a cosmopolitan by nature and in cultural background. A descendant of the illustrious Mexican statesman Matias Romero and son of a distinguished lawyer who spent many years in diplomatic service abroad, Pepe Romero received most of his schooling in the United States.

An intrepid freelance by temperament, Romero's background is replete with variegated experience. As



SELF-PORTRAIT. OIL.

By Pepe Romero.

IN THE PARK. OIL

By Pepe Romero

CLOWN. OIL.

By Pepe Romero.





CANDLES FOR THE DEAD. Oil.

By Pepe Romero.

a schoolboy in Washington he worked during vacation months in the Library of Congress; subsequently he tried his hand at many and diverse jobs in New York. He made his living as a dancer on the stage, as a boxer in the arena; he worked as an actor in Hollywood studios, and later as a script-writer. It was during the years he spent in Hollywood that he commenced to paint, initially turning out mordant caricatures of well-known folk which were exhibited in local galleries and found considerable acceptance. Even then—ten years ago—he evinced in his satiric compositions a gift for capturing with a few bold brushstrokes the intrinsic note of character and a highly unusual sense of color values. And these early traits have notably grown in clarity and puissance in his present work.

Inspired, restless and prolific, Pepe Romero will most likely undergo further development in the future; his expression will probably achieve a greater refinement and a wider scope. But basing my conclusion upon his performance to date, I have a feeling that I have picked another winner.



SOLDIER. Oil.

By Pepe Romero.



PORTRAIT. Oil.

By Pepe Romero.

Un Poco de Todo

INNOCENTS AND SAUCERS

It is to be hoped that the address which the distinguished astronomer, Dr. Otto Struve of the University of California, delivered recently at the Western Amateur Astronomers Convention, will be widely published for the benefit of the innocents who are convinced that flying saucers are space ships from other worlds; for Dr. Struve combed the universe for evidence of intelligent beings. Like other astronomers he finds that of all planets in the solar system only the earth can support intelligent life. Mars? Its green areas may be lichen and mosses, but not chlorophyll producing vegetation. Besides, it hasn't water enough. Venus? It is wrapped in suffocating carbon dioxide, with no free oxygen or water. Lead would melt on Mercury. The other planets have atmospheres of ammonia and methano.

After promenading, so to speak, through the millions and millions of stars of the Milky Way Dr. Struve, for purely statistical reasons, concedes that among them there may be a thousand inhabitable worlds, with the probability that the estimate is too large by a factor of ten or a hundred. The average distance of these hypothetical worlds is 50,000 light-years. If intelligent creatures at this enormous distance could see an event here through some remarkable telescope it would have to be one that occurred when Neanderthal man was clubbing wild animals for food.

Evidently the innocents who believe not only that the flying saucers are space ships but that they are manned by intelligent crews who are looking us over with pity for our sorry social condition have something to think about. If they traveled with the speed of light it must have taken the visitors at least 50,000 years to get here, and it will take them 50,000 more to get back. The late Sir James Jeans thought that life might be "a disease of matter in its old age." Dr. Struve holds with him that life is evanescent and that we may not be good for much more than 100,000 years—an estimate which is probably much too low, even if we admit that homo sapiens is a very unstable species and a mere upstart compared with the termite.

Possibly it may be worth a round trip that takes twenty times as long as recorded human history to look on a moribund form of life. But how could the crews of the flying saucers have known 50,000 light-years ago of wars that have cost millions of lives, of revolutions, of airplanes that are faster than the speed of sound, of great cities buzzing with the activities of a mechanized society? Perhaps relativity may help the innocents; for it makes sense in relativity to ask: "How were you feeling next week?"

AIR TESTING AFTER ATOMIC BLASTS

Not so long ago a group of physicists who participated in a University of Chicago radio forum pointed out that it might be possible to charge the air with radioactive cobalt particles and thus virtually wipe out most of the human race. Considering that a fair number of atomic bombs, big and little, have been detonated in Nevada, that the usual awesome mushroom-shaped clouds rose and spread out to be eventually dissipated by the wind, what was the effect on the air of the country as a whole?

Most of the particles of which a mushroom cloud is composed fall near the spot where the explosion occurred. The Atomic Energy Commission says that atomic weapons are not detonated unless conditions are such that what it calls "radiological safety" is assured. Nevertheless, a good deal of radioactive stuff is picked up and carried by the wind and deposited all over the country. Therefore a nation-wide monitoring team keeps an eye on the air. So far there have been no dangerous concentrations of radioactive "fall-out," as it is called, that is outside of the proving grounds in Nevada.

A cloud that is only minutely radioactive can be traced across the country. Meteorologists find that they have a new means of studying the movements of large masses of air at varying altitudes.

The tests made in Nevada increased the radioactivity of the air in the country as a whole, but the total temporary effect was no greater than the background radioactivity of Denver, Col., where there is much uranium in the rocks. The normal radioactivity of Denver's air is about five times that of New York or Washington, D. C. So there is nothing to worry about in the East when atomic bombs explode in Nevada.

Whenever there is an atomic blast, planes are sent up to sample and track the cloud and to survey the terrain. Some of the planes carry on their wings boxes to collect air for analysis. The planes circle out as far as 600 miles from the site of the explosion to make certain that commercial airways crossed by a cloud are safe. The altitude is only fifty feet. Each plane carries a six-foot tube through which samples of air are drawn into an ion chamber, that is, a chamber in which radioactivity is detected and which can tell the difference between activity on the surface of the ground and in the air at the level of the plane.

INQUISITIVE RATS

Rats seem to have a built-in urge to learn even when they have no hope of profiting by their knowledge. This is the finding of two University of Wisconsin psychologists, Robert W. Leary and Prof. Harry F. Harlow.

It seems that curiosity alone is enough to bring about the expenditure of a good deal of energy in learning the ins-and-outs of a circular "endless" maze in which trap doors open whenever the rat scuttles into certain recognizable blind alleys. Each trap door opens another chamber of the maze, and the rats continue to operate the doors just to see what is on the other side.

When a food reward is offered for successful threading of the maze, the rats that have been opening doors on their own initiative are much better at getting the food than rats that have been permitted to run through the maze while the doors opened automatically every three minutes. In other words, rats that have been exercising some initiative in exploring the maze learn the twists and turns more easily than do those to which all doors automatically open.

This agrees with other recent experiments which show that monkeys have a natural inclination to solve puzzles just for the sake of doing it. Monkeys even enjoy solving the same puzzles over and over again.

Literary Appraisals

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA. By Ernest Hemingway. 140 pp New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE "Old Man" is a Cuban, without money to buy proper gear or even food, and past the days of his greatest strength, when he was "El Campeón" of the docks. He fishes for his living, far out in the Gulf Stream, in a skiff with patched sails. It is September, the month of hurricanes and of the biggest fish. After eighty-four luckless days a marlin strikes his bait a hundred fathoms below the boat. The old man, Santiago, is "fast to the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of." The ultimate is now demanded of the craft which a half-century of fishing has taught him.

It is a tale superbly told and in the telling Ernest Hemingway used all the craft his hard, disciplined trying over so many years has given him. Both craft—writing and fishing—are clearly in mind when the old man Santiago thinks of the strangeness of his powers as fisherman. "The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it." When the boy who took care of him asked if he was strong enough now for a truly big fish, he said, "I think so. And there are many tricks."

In "Big Two-Hearted River," one of the best and happiest of his early short stories, Hemingway sent a young man very like himself off alone on a fishing trip in completely deserted country in northern Michigan. The young man, Nick, needed to be alone and to control his thinking with physical tiredness and to get back something in himself to which memories of fishing seemed to offer a clue.

The actual fishing was even better than his memories of it. He "felt all the old feeling." The trip was a success because Nick, grateful for the purity of his pleasure, was able to set himself limits. He did not go into the deep water of the swamp where the biggest fish were, but where it might be impossible to land them. "In the fat deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it." There was plenty of time for that kind of fishing in the days to come.

"The Old Man and the Sea" written more than twenty-five years later, in the maturity of Hemingway's art, is a novella whose action is directly, cleanly and, as he would say, "truly" told. And in it Hemingway has described a fishing adventure which is tragic, or as close to tragedy as fishing may be. In "The Old Man and the Sea," as in the early "Big Two-Hearted River," the art and the truth come from a sense of limits. In the new story, however, a man exceeds the limits, and pays a price for it that is more than his own suffering.

The line of dramatic action in "The Old Man and the Sea" curves up and down with a classic purity of design to delight the makers of textbooks. But what Santiago brings back suggests something new about Hemingway himself, defines an attitude never so clearly present in his other work.

Hemingway's heroes have nearly always been defeated, or have died, and have lost what they loved,

even though the stories seemed at first to celebrate purely physical courage and prowess. The important thing was the code fought by, and keeping the right feeling toward what was fought for, and when something had been won, not to let the sharks have it.

Usually the hero has been alone in his defeat, like Lieutenant Henry in "Farewell to Arms," walking back to his hotel in the rain, or Robert Jordan dying at the bridge in "For Whom the Bell Tolls," or Harry Morgan, also a Gulf fisherman in "To Have and Have Not," gasping out, with a bullet through his stomach. "One man alone ain't got no bloody... chance."

Often his people have been profoundly bitter in defeat, like Belmonte, the matador, in "The Sun Also Rises," sick with a fistula, jeered at by the crowd, putting his head on the barrera, not seeing or hearing anything, just going through his pain, or the demoted Colonel Cantwell in "Across the River and into the Trees," trying to find abusive enough epithets for Truman and the political generals and a writer whose face he doesn't like. "Seems like when they get started they don't leave a guy nothing," the boy says at the end of "My Old Man."

* * *

This is the nothingness, the "nada" of the famous parody of the Lord's Prayer in "A Clean Well-Lighted Place." This is the world of the non-religious existentialists like Heidegger and Sartre, a world of self-imposed codes and devotions sustained wholly by the courage and will of the individual, by his capacity for facing his own truths, for leading an "authentic" existence. If he fails, he encounters nothingness, meaninglessness, both in human society and the indifferent realm of nature.

In "The Old Man and the Sea," it is all quite different. The old man has learned humility, which he knew "was not disgraceful, and carried no less of true pride." Humility understands the limits of what a man can do alone, and knows how much his being, the worth and humanity of his being, depends on community with other men and with nature, which is here the sea. Santiago has the language to express this, as the American Harry Morgan did not. Santiago speaks in those formalized idioms from the Romance languages which in so many of Hemingway's stories have served to express ideas of dignity, propriety and love. Santiago lives in a good town where he had been happy with his wife, and where there is now the boy. He had taught the boy fishing, and the boy loves him. "Que va," the boy says devotedly. "There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you."

* * *

Hemingway we know was himself a champion, a great winner of boxing matches and game fishing contests at Key West and in the Bahamas in the Thirties. But in the later stories, in an uncomfortably personal way, it seemed not enough for the hero to know he was a champion. He needed adulation from those around him, from waiters, people of old families and especially sexually satisfied women who had so little being apart from him that they created none of the moral demands, the difficult ups and downs of any normal human relationship.

It is a little like this with Santiago and the boy, but the old man, to repeat, has humility, and the shared craft of fishing is a reality between them. What he brings back to the boy at the end of the story implies a human continuity and development that far transcends this individual relationship. When Santiago says "Man is not made for defeat," he is not thinking primarily of the individual.

Even without the boy Santiago is not alone on a sea, which, with its creatures, he knows well and loves with discrimination. The sea is feminine for him, as it is not for the motorboat men. The Gulf Stream takes him out where he wants to go, and the trade winds bring him back, with lights of Havana to guide him. When the huge marlin strikes, he is bound in shared suffering with a fellow creature for whom he finds adjectives like "calm" and "beautiful" and "noble." Santiago does not like to kill, and he does not like to think, except about sin, which he is not sure he believes in.

Santiago's simplicity together with the articulateness of his soliloquies sometimes makes him seem a personified attitude of his complex creator rather than a concrete personality in his own right. The action is wonderfully particularized, but not the man to whom it happens and who gives it meaning. The talk of baseball, of the great Di Maggio and the "Tigres" of Detroit does not help this. And the reference to sin inevitably recalls the other American story of the pursuit of a big fish in which Melville went rather more deeply down among "the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine set," that dark invincible sphere formed "in fright" as well as love.

But these are simply the bounds rather than the faults of a short tale magnificently told. Like "Across the River and into the Trees," "The Old Man and the Sea" (a September Book-of-the-Month dual choice) is an interruption in the long major work which has engaged Hemingway since the war. But it is not

a disturbing interruption, as "Across the River" sometimes was in its moments of tastelessness and spleen. In his imagination of the fishing in "The Old Man and the Sea," Hemingway has, like the young man in "Big Two-Hearted River," got back to something good and true in himself, that has always been there. And with it are new indications of humility and maturity and a deeper sense of being at home in life which promise well for the novel in the making. Hemingway is still a great writer, with the strength and craft and courage to go far out, and perhaps even far down, for the truly big ones.

R. G. D.

GATEWAY TO FORTUNE. By Peter Bourne. 348 pp. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons

A HISTORICAL adventure story, "Gateway to Fortune" tells how the Panama route was sold to Congress and the American people in preference to the Nicaragua route; how a revolution was then promoted with the support of Teddy Roosevelt and the Navy to detach the neck of the isthmus from Colombia; and how the canal was built in spite of the hell and high water of the tropics and the murderous activities of Yellow Jack.

It is Peter Bourne's fourth novel in this field, the others having dealt with similarly dramatic events in Panama, Haiti and Mexico. History provided him with excellent material, but his own invention has been nowhere as good as his research.

The juvenile lead is a young surveyor and canal fanatic, Wesley Adam. To him the twin peaks of Culebra Cut are "nature's challenge to man, and he was man enough to feel it and take it up." He felt that "any work which could lead to the betterment of world conditions was a matter of urgency."

Technicians have their human side, and Wesley Adam had plenty of woman trouble. His wife, Dulcie, an empty-headed creature, gives him the run-

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around and then runs off with his ex-boss. But Wes is already prepared to fall in love with Anne Perri-
got, whose father, a French Panamanian, has a good
(and mysterious) reason for hating the American.

The whole thing is strictly cut and dried, with
characters out of a Plotto card index, the dialogue
windy and unreal. Bourne is at his best rewriting
actual history; the high point of the story is the blow-
by-blow account of the "revolution," and how our
Navy arrived in the nick of time to frustrate the Co-
lombians' attempt to put it down. It's a pity that
the author, who has such a nose for old news, is un-
able to create believable people to make it come alive.

L. M.

CHILDREN OF KAYWANA By Edgar Mittelholzer
511 pp. New York: The John Day Company.

ONE of the least known and, in many respects, the
least inviting portions of the Americas is that
short strip just above the Equator which comprises
Guiana. Divided now among the British, Dutch and
French, it represents the only foreign toehold on the
mainland of South America. Perhaps the quickest way
to sum up the place is to say that our Good Neigh-
bors seem largely content to let the Europeans have
it.

Now the earliest days as well as the present of
this stretch of swamp, savanna and almost inaccessi-
ble forest are being brought teemingly close by Edgar
Mittelholzer, a native of British Guiana. His wryly
subtle and curiously diverting novel, "Shadows Move
Among Them," which critics were acclaiming less than
a year ago, was set in that colony as it is today. For
his current book he has gone back to British Guiana's
first white settlements when it was the Dutch who
were struggling to establish plantations.

"Children of Kaywana," beginning with the ear-
ly Sixteen Hundreds and covering one hundred and
sixty-five years, has required some serious digging. It
also seems to have required an almost bludgeoning type
of prose; and some of the uglier details with which

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Mr. Mittelholzer is prodigal may prove almost too much for the sensibilities of some readers.

"Shadows Move Among Them" charmed because it was different to the point of being peculiar. "Children of Kanywana" is different too—to the point where readers are likely to say either, "Oh, come now," or "Whew!" While records evidently show that the Dutch in those days were about as bestial as colonizers could be, the author does seem to pile it on too thick.

* * *

At first shocked, then titillated, then bored, and finally just benumbed, this reader tried to think of some form of evil, depravity, perversion, cruelty or torture which the van Groenwegel family did not inflict with considerable gusto, usually upon one another; the list never got beyond a couple of items. One cannot help suspecting that Mr. Mittelholzer hoped to make historical facts go down easier by larding them heavily with sex. It struck this reviewer as being so overdone that, for once, the saintly characters seemed far more interesting than the sinners.

Instead of making facts (actually dramatic enough in themselves) palatable, the author has come perilously close to making them indigestible. By far the best part of the book, so far as this reader is concerned, is that dealing with the documented uprising of the blacks.

V. L. W.

MITRE AND ARGENTINA By William H. Jeffrey. 290 pp. New York: Library Publishers.

MOST Americans who know Buenos Aires are likely to think of Bartolomé Mitre as the name of the street on which the National City Bank and the American Club are located. Few realize that it was the name of united Argentina's first constitutional President, later the first editor of La Nación which, since the death of La Prensa in 1951, has been the only independent newspaper in the country.



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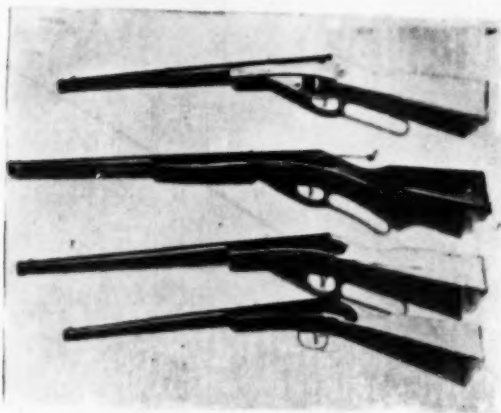
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Mitre lived to be 84 and his career dominated the Argentine scene for four decades. In his last years, he was a living legend to his countrymen. Had he lived earlier, and been identified with the separation from Spain, there is every reason to believe he would have ranked with San Martin, among whose biographers he was. Mitre's main services were in line with the reorganization and development of the republic rather than with its liberation. Thus he has been a national and regional, rather than a world, figure.

William H. Jeffrey of the Department of History of the University of Maine tells his dramatic story without adornment. He characterizes his subject sharply with one anecdote. When Mitre was on trial for his life before a military tribunal in 1874, in connection with an abortive political movement, his captors trusted him so completely that they sent him from one jail to another, alone and carrying his own commitment papers. As Dr. Jeffrey puts it, "The word of Bartolomé Mitre was accepted by friend and enemy alike."

Mitre's pre-eminence began with the Battle of Pavón, in 1861. This stabilized the relationship between the capital and province of Buenos Aires, and the other provinces which made up the Argentine Confederation. The battle concluded a tortuous eight-year period, during which Mitre championed Buenos Aires against Gen. Just José Urquiza, president of the Confederation. Pavón left Mitre not only military victor, but the greatest moral force in the land. Mitre was elected President in 1862 for a six-year term, during which there was great economic progress.

He survived his own administration by nearly thirty-eight years, and his jubilee in 1901 was a great national celebration. Summing up, the author says "perhaps Mitre's greatest contribution and the one inspiring to Argentines ever since lay in his devotion to liberty and democracy." In that light, it is ironic that the great journal he started should still be backing his ideals at a time when the rulers of Argentina are not.

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Current Attractions

OPERA

By Vane C. Dalton

WITH presentation at the Bellas Artes of "La Leyenda de Rudel" and "Gianni Schicchi" the Academy of Opera concluded its brief though in many ways quite eventful season, comprising five plays which were performed twice before a large and appreciative public.

In addition to Oralia Dominguez, who was the honor guest of this occasion, and enacted the leading role in "La Mulata de Córdoba," the mezzo-soprano Conchita de los Santos, the sopranos Rosa Rodriguez and Rosita Rimoch, and the tenor Joaquín Alvarez were the season's leading singers. All four of these new performers revealed themselves as singers clearly approaching professional standards, and will most likely be heard during the forthcoming seasons of the Opera Nacional.

"La Mulata de Córdoba" and "La Leyenda de Rudel," by the Mexican composer Ricardo Castro, were in many respects the most interesting of the five plays, and undoubtedly the most difficult to stage. For albeit Ricardo Castro was an excellent musician—a fact which rather belatedly is being discovered now—his operatic compositions were seriously marred by extremely faulty librettos. Both of these plays, despite a considerable musical merit, suffer from the same defects of inconsistency and looseness in the development of theme and the lack of dramatic effectiveness.

"La Leyenda de Rudel" returned to our footlights after a lapse of forty-five years, or since its initial and hardly successful local presentation by the Emilio de Marchi company in 1907. The respective directors in its present revival, Eduardo Hernandez Moneado, from his podium, Charles Laila, back-stage,

and Antonio Lopez Mancera, who designed the quite appropriate decor, have obviously exerted their utmost efforts to render Castro's cumbersome work musically and dramatically pleasing.

And, indeed, aided by the orchestra's very able performance, despite the play's sluggish tempo, Laila managed to imbue it with animation and movement, achieving his best effects in the third act, with the participation of the ballet corps of the National Institute of Fine Arts, conducted by Marta Bracho.

The sequence in the role of Segolena was carried out in a quite satisfactory manner by Betty Fabile and Alicia Aguilar. The part of Rudel was interpreted in the first act by Mendieta and those following by José Sosa. And while the first had slight opportunity in his brief assignment to demonstrate his gifts, the latter revealed ample capacity for carrying out more responsible parts, not only because his voice has a natural beauty but mainly of his fine talent and excellent taste in deportment and singing. We have previously observed these qualities in the fine performance he rendered in "El Hijo Prodigio," "Madame Butterfly" and "Gianni Schicchi." His interpretation of Rinuccio in the latter play was truly outstanding.

Aurora Woodrow—a very pleasing Susuki in "Madame Butterfly"—performed the part of the Countess of Tripoli in "La Leyenda de Rudel" with greater theatrical than vocal ability, while the rest of the cast limited itself to compliance with its assignment to the best of its ability.

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By and large, the brief season of the Academy of Opera more than fulfilled our moderate expectations. It provided good entertainment and a rather severe test for a group of student performers, of whom a surprisingly high average stands a chance of graduating to a professional status.

EL ZABETH SCHWARTZKOPF

Under the auspices of the Daniel Musical Association, the notable opera soprano Elizabeth Schwartzkopf will appear in a varied program at the Palacio de Bellas Artes on the 5th of next month.

Leading singer at the State Opera of Vienna, and widely regarded as one of the finest opera sopranos on the European stage, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf's voice is known on this continent mainly through records. In recent years she has performed at the Scala in Milan, Covent Garden in London, at festivals of Salzburg, Lucerne, Perugia, Edinburgh and Bayreuth.

Not long ago she appeared in the premiere presentation of Stravinsky's new opera, "The Progress of the Disolute," under the composer's direction, given at the La Fenice Theatre at Venice, and her personal success was so outstanding that many critics largely attributed to her the success of the new opera. Monterrey.

Elizabeth Schwartzkopf is making at this time a concert tour through various countries of Latin America, and Mexico is included in her itinerary with this single concert at the Bellas Artes, followed by one in Monterrey.

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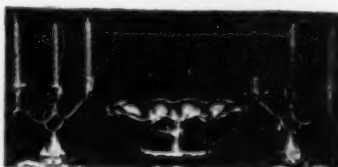
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the symphony orchestra, is returning to Mexico for a single recital, to be given at the Palacio de Bellas Artes on Wednesday night, the 29th of this month.

Pupil of the eminent composer Bela Bartok and one of his most able interpreters, Georg Sandor, since his early triumphs in Mexico has achieved renown all over the world. In recent months he performed in the larger cities of Australia, while his local concert terminates a most successful tour through the countries of South and Central America, which is to be followed by a number of engagements during the winter months in New York.

The program he will present at the Bellas Artes will include Beethoven's Sonata Op. 109, Shumann's "Carnaval," and a number of shorter works by Bach, Liszt, Debussy and Prokofieff.

ORALIA DOMINGUEZ

UNDER the patronage of the Opera Nacional, the institution to which she owes in very large part the outstanding success she has achieved in her artistic career, the eminent Mexican mezzo-soprano Oralia Dominguez will offer two recitals at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, prior to her departure for Italy, where she will seek new laurels.

The first of these recitals will be given on Tuesday, the 28th of this month. The program, containing no opera music, will consist of compositions by Gluck, Monsigny, Martini, Lully, Brahms, Mahler, Falla and Milhaud. The second recital, on Friday, the 30th, will comprise a program of works by Schumann, Debussy, and the Mexican composers Revueltas and Moreno. Salvador Ochoa will appear as piano accompanist at both recitals.



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Art and Personal Notes

THE Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute (Calle de Panuco No. 10) is offering during the course of this month an exhibition of pastels and drawings by Valet—we have seen in previous exhibits, these drawings are xico during the past three years. Like her paintings to Swan, which were made by this gifted artist in Mexico powerfully designed and reveal this artist's close identification with this country's life and art.

At the conclusion of this highly interesting exhibit, the above Institute will present a group of paintings by the young Canadian artist Arnold Belkin.

Born in 1930, Mr. Belkin has been residing in Mexico since 1948 and has been studying art at the local Esmeralda School and the National Polytechnic Institute. Pupil of José L. Gutierrez, who is widely known for his experiments in new media, the artist has gathered for his initial local exhibits works painted with vinelite over sheets of masonite.

A LARGE collection of landscapes in oil by the distinguished Mexican painter Armando García Núñez is being shown at this time by the art galleries of the Librería Juárez (Avenida Juárez No. 102). The collection, largely made up of canvases painted in the vicinity of Mexico City, includes various landscapes from Arizona, where the artist was on a recent visit.

MARGARITA WEHMANN is presenting her newest work, landscapes painted in Mexico and Switzerland, as well as still life and figure compositions, at the new gallery located at Nuevo León No. 238.

SEMI-ABSTRACT sculptures in stone, bronze and pewter by Geles Cabrera may be seen during this month at the Galería Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado No. 16-C).

THE Riggs-Sargent Gallery (Calle de Galvez No. 25, Villa Obregón) is exhibiting a quite unusual group of photographs on Mexican themes by Ursel Bernath. Outstanding in composition and technical excellence, these photographs define much more than mere picturesqueness. Realistically projecting typical aspects of native life they comprise a revealing social document.

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THE Galeria Mont (Calle de Hamburgo No. 40) is introducing to the local public the work of Ginés Parra, a Spanish artist of considerable renown who has lived and worked most of his life in Paris. Landscapes, still life and figure compositions make up the collection. Preserving in his painting traces of Spanish traditional influence, Ginés Parra is, however, definitely a product of the Modern French school.

AS a special art event in connection with the Tenth National Surgical Assembly, a group exhibition of paintings on medical themes by amateur painters in the Medical profession will be presented next month in the foyer of Hospital Juárez.

A medal and various diplomas of honor will be awarded to the winning exhibitors through a selection made by a designated jury.

EMMA REYES, a new painter of considerable talent, is staging her initial public exhibit at the Galeria Arte Contemporaneo (Calle de Ambarés No. 12).

WORKS by three young and highly gifted painters, Alberto Gironella, Hector Xavier and Vlado, comprise the unusually fine current exhibit at the Galeria Prisse.

PRINTS by a select group of contemporary Mexican engravers are being shown through this month in the Salon Verde of the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

PAINTINGS in oil by the distinguished Spanish artist Enrique Climent are on view at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milan No. 18).

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Patterns of an Old City

Continued from page 36

No value till you dig it up. Stephen would be twenty-two next month, she thought, and it is almost a year since they buried him at the foot of the ridge near a ruined village in Korea and placed a little whitewashed cross over his grave amid the even rows of other little crosses. Some day they will dig him up and bring him home, and maybe then he won't seem so completely lost and gone.

The memory did not produce a pang of pain. She had lived with pain so long that it had become an inseparable part of her being. Sorrow had been a living process, a normal state; she became inured to it as a cripple becomes inured to a missing limb. Her life had indeed essentially defined a sequence of brief fulfillment alternated by irreparable loss. It was an existence perpetuated through supreme fortitude, through an ability to adjust herself to conditions that bordered on the unadjustable.

Stephen was five when his father died, and thereon her own life became totally submerged in his. She was still young and not bad looking; but she had been truly a one-man woman, and within a world that shrank to a precarious margin her tiny son was yet a recompense. She built her hopes on him; she lived from day to day for him alone, and in this one boundless devotion the days were short and the years sped on; time vanished, and now he too was gone.

There was no one to worry about henceforth; she was relieved of care and responsibilities; there was only the illogical, the incomprehensible need to survive—the need to make the torture of her loss and utter solitude endurable, to allow time to deaden her senses, to allay her grief in languor, in insensate inertia.

It was almost a year. And now, yielding to the first minute stirrings of returning avidity, she compelled herself to undertake this journey to a foreign land.

* * *

"I don't know much about this—whateacallit?—archiology," Mr. Latham continued, "but it's plain

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enough for anyone to see that whoever these people were they had plenty of pueck and sticktoitiveness. Why I guess it took thousands of 'em laboring in perfect teamwork and properly supervised, and maybe through hundreds of years, as this Señor Mendoza, our guide, explained, to cut and carve all this stone without the aid of any kind of tools that we know, not even a common chisel, and stack up all these temples and palaces. They sure had what it takes, all right. They were not afraid to tackle something big, and even if a great-grandson finished what his great-grand-daddy started, to stay with it till it was done. They certainly were no quitters. But take a look at it now. It seems as if the job they tackled was so enormous, so exhausting, that by the time they finished they were petered out—just completely worn out and unable to do anything worth while ever since. Petered out for keeps."

Hearing these homely divagations Professor Levinson, to whom people of Mr. Latham's type were known mostly from reading and not from personal encounter, was repeatedly amazed as well as amused. It seemed delightful for all its outlandishness, that an unlettered man with nothing more than a superficial perception could voice opinions that had the semblance of logic and truth. And although antiquity was not in his own scientific province—his pursuits dealing with the realm of humanities in its modern aspects—despite his scientific indifference, despite his incapacity to arouse in himself a concern in a mystery for which he could not even begin to formulate a hypothetical solution, the ruins he beheld, beyond their unanswerable interrogation, bordering as they did on something approaching the eternal and timeless, remotely suggested an answer to his personal problem, or at least to lessen its inescapable burden.

A man's lifetime, he thought, becomes a synonym for an all-absorbing task. He shuns the more normal



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rewards of existence—a wife, children, a home. He achieves a kind of selflessness, a kind of monastic euphoria, the paradox of completion through selfdenial, and then that innocuous little cough it seemed he had had for years without ever taking note of, suddenly renders him unfit to go on with this all-absorbing task; suddenly he is faced by an imperative need to make his decision; to either admit that he is petered out for keeps or let a surgeon's scalpel ascertain whether it is a curable ulcer or tumor or a malignant growth whose tentacles enwrapping the lungs are reaching out to grasp the heart.

And as he listened to Mr. Latham's artless commentary, the need to achieve this decision, which with self-admitted cowardice he strove to defer by a fortnight through this voyage to Yucatán, seemed less momentous or pressing. The dust impregnate with eternity he trod reawakened his capacity for selflessness, and as he listened on he gradually yielded to a serenity he had not known for many days.

* * *

"They've just folded up and gone to sleep," Mr. Latham went on. "Taken on a pretty long siesta. But time will catch up with them one of these days. They'll snap out of it. Time'll catch up with them."

Brooks, who hitherto sat motionless and silent, cleared his throat and stirred in his seat as if he were about to say something. But after uncrossing and recrossing his legs, he resumed his silence. Time will catch up with me, he thought, if I don't snap out of it, if I don't get my mind set one way or the other. Or has it been just a kind of pipedream, just an idea I've been playing with—a game of hide-and-seek I've been playing with myself?... Yes. I guess I haven't thought it out clearly. I guess I've just been toying with it, just something hanging in the back of my mind. This trip—this vacation—maybe it's a kind of rehearsal for a final break. I suppose I could have done it this time. If I had the guts or my mind was made up. Could have gone off with at least six thousand dollars. Not a hell of a lot, but it could keep me going for quite a while. Fifty thousand pesos could

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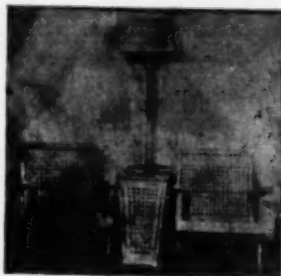
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set me up in some kind of business. Make me independent. My own boss. A lot of money down here. Enough to promote something, to get me started. It would be a shock to Dobson. The last man in the world I ever thought would do a thing like that, he'd say. I would have bet my shirt on Brooks. Good old Brooks. Cautious, faithful, steady. Too cautious even to get married. Quiet and frugal. Never missed a dime to this day. It just goes to show that you can never bank on anybody. A man can change from one day to the next. Turn from white to black.

This idea in the back of my mind. Maybe that's why I didn't tell them I was going to Mexico. I had a feeling that I was coming down here to take a look at the place—to see if it might do if I should ever decide. Just look it over, in case I ever make up my mind... in case I ever...

The word pipedream mirthlessly intruded on his thoughts like a self-accusing finger, and insistently repeating itself broke them off.

"Yes," Mr. Latham stressed. "Time has to catch up with them sooner or later. There are plenty of smart people here—some pretty shrewd businessmen. Some wide-awake fellows who are not willing to be left behind. They are the ones who'll have to pull the rest of 'em out of the rut. That, the way it seems to me, is the problem everywhere. The whole trouble with the world is that some countries have gotten far ahead of others, and the ones that are left behind are jealous of the ones that have gone ahead, and it's this jealousy that makes 'em unfriendly. That's what's behind all these wars, if you look at it closely. Just jealousy and begrudging. The poor wanting to take it away from the rich. That's what's behind communism too. If you can't make everybody happy by making them rich, you can make everybody happy by making them poor—by bringing them down to a common level. A kind of miscarriage of democracy. Equality through poverty..."

And then, as if suddenly surmising that he had been carrying on a virtual monologue, that what he

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was saying no longer seemed to interest his listeners, that their eyes distractedly gazed into space, Mr. Latham stopped talking and fixed his own eyes on the horizon.

* * *

The pyramid that had gradually turned from glowing pink to lilac, then darkened to purple, now loomed in an almost black silhouette over the weird conflagration set off by the great crimson disk of the sun. And as they silently watched the flaming disk sinking beyond the edge of the earth, sinking bit by bit until it vanished, for a brief and fleeting moment, during an enchanted fugacious moment, wrenched from their solitary hidden torment, brought together in unspoken communion, they sensed the warmth of fellowship, of an ineffable closeness, a strange and new feeling akin to peace and tranquility.

VOLCANO

Continued from page 14

see, they do live here. That to say, they did. But now they don't any more, pues."

"I particularly wanted to find Candelaria. She used to be my cook—"

"Oh yes, I know. And I'm her sister-cousin, but they've gone away and left me to guard the house."

She fingered the crimson zinnia stuck into one of the thick plaits of her blue-black hair and beamed at me.

"Could you tell me where they are?" I asked.

"Pos, yes. They're with my uncle's wife, that Agapita."

"And where does she live?"

The turkey hen walked out of the door again, and the woman put her foot on the string trailing behind it.

"In Tuxcala, puesen."

"And where is that?"

"Who knows," said the woman.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see the Professor getting more and more impatient in the back of the ear, but I wasn't going to be stampeded.

"Is it far from here?"

The woman considered this for a moment, and then she said, "Oh yes."

"How far?"

"Much very far, señor. You go to Guadalajara, and you take a bus of the afternoon to San Isidro, and the journey lasts a whole day until nightfall, and a little moment after you leave San Isidro you come



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to a village where they make saddles of wood." She paused to draw breath and to push the turkey hen back into the house. "Then, when the bus stops, you ask if that's Tuxcala, and if they say yes, then that's where you get out."

She stood looking at me blankly while I was considering this, and then suddenly she brightened; her dark eyes glistened in her muddy brown face.

"I know," she said, with the air of one who has just successfully negotiated a complicated sum in her head. "Why don't you not go to Tuxcala at all? You can leave a message for them here with me. Already they sent to say that they were coming back, and they'll be here with all certainty by the end of the week—or by the day past tomorrow."

"And when did they send to say that?"

"Oh, soon after they went away. You see, they only went on a visit."

"And how long ago was that?"

The woman went into a short trance, staring at the ground. Then she looked up at me, and said, "Three months ago, señor, or two, or even very much more ago, pues."

I gave up and walked slowly back to the car. As we drove away, the woman stood waving to us from the doorway of the house; a grimy, mahogany-colored little boy was clinging to her spotless satin dress with one hand and picking his nose with the other. The gray turkey hen wandered past them out into the street and started to scabble about in the gutter.

We turned off the main highway a little before sunset and entered on the last seventy kilometers of the steep and sinuous road to Uruapan. As we began to climb, the air freshened and soon we were driving among pine forests beneath lofty crags. Here and there were meadows full of cattle, and once we passed a little sparkling stream. The villages too contributed to the Alpine atmosphere: their little houses were of adobe no longer but sturdily built of wood with wide overhanging eaves. By now the lamps were lit, and in their soft glow was a mellow feeling of comfort and cheerfulness. In the dusk you could ima-

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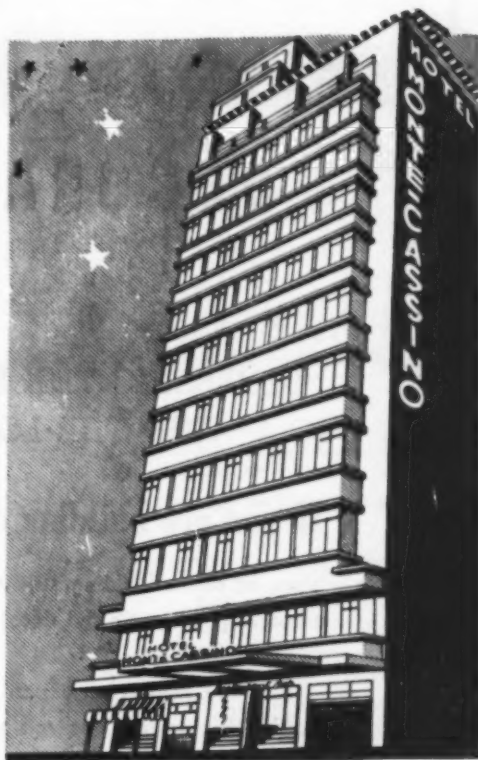
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gine yourself back in the old Austria, scenting the sharp tang of resin and listening to the friendly buzz of talk by the "Weinstube. Perhaps Maximilian too, when he paid his first state visit to Michoacán, which he described as the most troublesome province of his empire, took fresh heart in this mountain air and was carried back in memory to the great post highway from Vienna to Trieste.

The road wound in and out with unbelievable intricacy, past woods, over bridges, around a series of hills that all seemed, in the gathering gloom, to be of the same curiously familiar shape—squat flattened cones, smooth and regular, their outlines blurred with a haze of pine trees. The sun had already set, but a faint glow remained ahead of us in the west.

"It looks as if we're catching up the sun, señor," said Silvanito, spitting tangerine seeds out of the car.

And indeed the light ahead was growing rosier, pulsating every quarter minute or so and giving the impression that behind the hills some titanic firework master was touching off, at fixed intervals, a chain of Bengal lights. Suddenly, however, one of them decided to act like a Roman candle. A burst of crimson light gushed over the summit of one of the flat-topped hills, setting on fire the clouds behind it.

* * *

It was our first view of the volcano, but the flames were still many miles away and only coincidence had placed the little peak directly between them and ourselves. One thing, however, was suddenly clear to me. Of course these hills were familiar. They were textbook volcanoes, familiar to every child who has had an illustrated geography primer. There they were, uniform in shape, diverse in size, hundreds upon hundreds of them swarming over the mountain country, an army of inverted cooking pans, cool now, but, no doubt, each in its time another Parícutin, carrying ruin and destruction over the whole state. For all Michoacán is of volcanic origin, and there is still a large waste area southeast of Uruapan, known as the Bad Lands, which, once a rich agricultural district, was turned into a desert by the sudden appearance two hundred years ago of the volcano Jorullo, in circumstances curiously similar to those attending the birth of Parícutin in 1943. Perhaps these violent and temporary volcanoes arise at fairly frequent intervals, safety valves for the whole region.

We left the red glare of the mountain behind us to the right, and as we ran downhill into Uruapan, twinkling lights began to appear through the pine trees below. The town lies in a fertile basin, famous for its flowers and orchards, but in the cold and feeble light of the street lamps its personality was austere.

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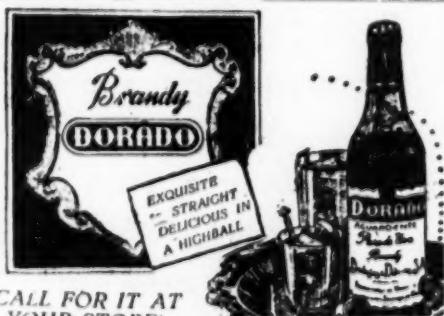
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re, and the houses, whitewashed and tiled, seemed to crouch secret and watchful beneath their wide eaves. Although it was not late, there were few people about.

I had not stayed in Uruapan when I visited Parícutin some years before, but I knew of a hotel. Its appearance didn't promise anything luxurious, but we were all ready for bed and prepared to make the best of whatever accommodation it offered. I knocked on the modest wooden door, and then we waited. After about five minutes it was opened by a very small boy. He blinked at us for a moment, and then said solemnly and in English, "Tourist mansion! Come in! You will like to know it!"

The hotel had been in darkness when we went to bed and I hadn't noticed my surroundings. In the morning I opened my door onto a huge patio, a shining cloister filled with flowers—azaleas, begonias, geraniums, stars of Bethlehem, in row upon row of neat white classical vases, draped with foliage and crowned with color. Among the flowers were many bird cages filled with parrots, mocking birds, cockatoos, and budgerigars. A flaming bougainvillea rose along one wall, and among its crimson blossoms a family of white canaries sang and chattered—little white stars gleaming in the morning sun. After the severity of the hotel front this brilliance was startling enough, and the unexpected effect of space was heightened by the view through an archway of another patio overlooking a rose garden.

This element of surprise persists wherever the patio is the focal point of the house. Guadalupe has many mean-looking streets, but often enough the dingy, plastered facades and barred and shuttered windows conceal elegant and flowery courts. Where an American or North European house displays a bold front to the world, the charms of the Spanish home are turned inward as if jealous or scornful of the world's admiration. Withdrawn and reserved as the Spanish character itself, the patio has, all the same, older and more distant origins. Perhaps the courts of the Alhambra at Granada are the most renowned and elegant of Spanish patios, with myrtles and fountains, their slender clustered colonnades and pavilions brilliant with mosaic and stucco and multicolored stucco. But all these glories are concealed behind severe and frowning battlements, and all were the work of Islam. In the twisted lanes of Cairo or Damascus, or in any city of the Moslem world from Fez to the Indies, are innumerable homes, humbler Alhambras, reserved and exquisite, hiding from a world of violence and maintaining sacrosanct the privacy of the family. This was the way of life and the chosen type of adobe that Spanish colonists took to their new lands, from Seville to Havana from Havana to Mexico, from Acapulco

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puleo to Mani'a, a way of life on which, long before the days of anthems and flags and all the other trappings of an imperialistic age, the sun never set.

The Fountanneys joined me for breakfast in the patio, among the flowers and the birds. The Professor had already been up and about for an hour. He was in great form and ordered three fried eggs with his ham.

The day was blue and brilliant. High above the rose garden Paricutin's white and lilac plume of smoke towered into the sky. After breakfast we explored the town. By day it was colorful and animated, displaying none of the mystery of the night before: hills rose on all sides and fir trees screened the view at the ends of all its cobbled lanes; everywhere there were flowers; down the main street one little plaza succeeded another, and in the gardens palms and pines, roses and plumblago and oranges and limes grew side by side; everywhere there were arcades, borne on slim pillars fashioned from pine trunks on square brick bases.

* * *

The market in Uruapan sprawls cheerfully through four or five steep and narrow streets, and so close'y are the booths crowded together that they attain the effect of an oriental bazaar. The air is full of the scent of fruit, piled in mounds of every irraginable variety and color. There are nuts of all kinds arranged in neat little heaps, cassero'es and cookpots of every size, laid out on rows and grouped in sets, little round white cheeses and mats fans and other types of plaited work. Where the last street merges into the plaza, we found the lacquer stores.

Lacquer is a specialty of Uruapan, which exports this ware to every part of the republic and to the United States. A great variety of objects are made, from matchboxes to large trays, including many different patterns of gourd, bowl, and calabash, most of the forms being useful rather than purely ornamental. Lacquerware as made in China and Japan has many country cousins, from the delicate work on Sringar papier-maché to the gay, and sometimes crude, Pontypriidd trays of early Victorian times. Uruapan ware is, in composition, more like the lac of Burma than true oriental lacquer, being made from the juices exuded by a plant bug related to the cochineal insect.



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The best examples of lacquerware in Uruapan are treated with a kind of gesso or clay, and the designs are incised, picked out in colored pigment, lacquered, and polished by hand. The work is gay and brilliant and is characterized by a profusion of manypetaled surface flowers, but the designs, though often crude and barbaric, are robust and forceful, and occasional pieces are attractive.

Even before the days of the volcano, Uruapan had a tourist trade on account of its climate and its beautiful surroundings, including the famous waterfall of Tzaráracua, and the national park which I particularly wanted to see. It is a large natural garden clinging to the sides of a gorge, through which, in foaming cataracts, rushes a clear, cold river. It lies a little way out of town, so we went there in the car, which we parked outside the gate, leaving Silvanito in charge of it, free to gossip with anybody who might pass.

The fact that there was no entrance fee may have had something to do with the air of neglect that hung over the garden, but perhaps this added to its charm. The paths were weed-grown and heavily shaded by tall evergreen trees, and the undergrowth pressed thickly on either side. Save for the shafts of sunlight that thrust powerfully through the leaves every few feet, polkadotting the path with s'ate and silver, the effect would have been most somber. However, in spite of the heavy scent of coffee blossom, the air was fresh, and there was none of the insect-peppered opacity that you find in tropical forests, where the sun's rays struggle with a haze of motes, like torchlight in a dark and dusty attic. The garden was wholesome and alive with the ripple of innumerable springs; its pellucid conduits, tinkling and artificial, ran merrily down the slopes of the gorge through a maze of fern-encrusted channels, their waters bubbling musically over pebble beds and swirling round mossy boulders. And above the myriad rustles and gurglings of the tiny streams, like the roll of drums behind an orchestra, the roar of the torrent was everywhere. Across the gorge was slung a sturdy wooden bridge, steeply roofed as if against Alpine rocks and snow, and here we sat down and looked about us. The setting was intimate, the details lavish. Beneath our feet the river

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churned and raced, massive boulders rumbling in its narrow bed. In and out, between the stony masses, darted a little flashing kingfisher, pursued, and evidently worried, by a pair of lilac-pollled hummingbirds. All along the steeply sloping banks, in the shade of giant Indian laurels, were ranged huge banana plants, their tattered leaves anything up to a dozen feet in length, the largest I had ever seen.

And there was tropical color as well as tropical size. In the interstices of many trees there were orchids in bloom, clumps of delicate odontoglossum, and here and there a vivid queen cattleya. I like orchids and think myself fortunate in being able to see so many, for Mexico has a great variety and indeed is said to be the world's largest producer of the only species in general commerce—the vanilla. In some private gardens there are fabulous collections of orchids; here, in Uruapan, they were distinguished neither for their rarity nor their profusion, but the occasional exotic touches of color—rose pink, violet, cinnamon, and speckled chestnut—lent extra brilliance to the scene. Down below, zigzagging and hovering over the broken surface of the water, whirled dragonflies, blue and scarlet, green and puce, like vivid slivers of the lavish masses of bougainvillea and morning glory that festooned the treetops on either bank. High among the blossoms, their murmurs submerged in the thunder of the cataract, the bees moved drowsily.

Beside us on the bridge a student leaned against the coping, deeply absorbed in a mathematical textbook; a little way up the stream, in a natural rock basin, three naked Indian boys were frisking in the water, somersaulting and slapping each other with lily pads. Apart from these, there was no one in all Uruapan who cared to share this loveliness with us.

...

I had to give in about the volcano. The Professor was very keen to go, and since our way home went right past the dirt road leading to the mountain, it seemed rather mean not to start a few hours earlier and take him.

I had visited Parícutín in its younger days, and it had certainly been an alarming and brilliant spect-

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acle. It had astonished the world by its sudden appearance, though, as is usual in such cases, there had been warning signs for some time before. There seems to be sympathy between volcanoes. The Neapolitans will tell you that when Vesuvius is quiet the mud volcano, the Solfatara, will be at its most active and that when the mud ceases to bubble they may expect the lava. Numerous portents heralded Parícutin's birth—earthquake shocks, subterranean rumblings, the sudden appearance and equally sudden disappearance of hot springs in the nearby mountains, and a minor eruption of the great peak of Colima. Then one day a Tarasco farmer, plowing his corn patch, was startled to see a jet of smoke gush up from a dip in the field a few yards. The earth trembled, and as he watched, the cracks in the soil widened, the ground heaved up, and flames poured out with the smoke. A new volcano had been born. In a few weeks it had piled itself a cone hundreds of feet high, from which it spewed lava and hot boulders, and far away in Ajijic we could hear the dull rumble of the explosions. Soon after that I had gone there with Mexican friends. We reached the neighborhood late; darkness had fallen, and we should have missed the narrow track that led to the volcano but for the stream of cars creeping along it. The way was terrible, and with every bump we lurched from side to side, but, once started, it was impossible to turn back against the flow of cars. There seemed no reason why we should ever arrive anywhere. We could hear the explosions, but they sounded no nearer than they had done a couple of hours before. We could see a glow high in the sky, but round each corner we met only blackness again. For more than three hours we went on like this. Then, suddenly, we turned one more corner the road opened out into a field, and there was the volcano, a dark regular cone with a fire-work show on top of it.

It was a fantastic sight. As though it were breathing, the volcano gave off deep resonant explosions, and with every breath there arose a shower of incandescent rocks. The larger ones were hurled out of the crater. The smaller, thrown straight up into the air, fell straight down again, but the volcano's agitated breath came so short that almost always, before they dropped again into those boiling depths, a new breath caught them, so that they bounced up and down like celluloid balls on a fountain in a shooting gallery. They were not all the same color, these flaming rocks and stones. Some were electric white, some were tinged with rose, and here and there one was red or sprouted fiery hair. The reverberations were continuous and the ground shook. From time to time there

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came a greater shock, and the larger boulders were hurled higher. Sometimes there came a little lull, and then the small bouncing stones, glowing duller and duller, would fall back into the crater. We stood directly beside a small lava stream, but it was still molten and had hardly formed a crust. The shaking body of the earth, the explosions coming like hurried breath, the tongue of lava, and the fiery spittings made it very easy to understand how man had invented his dragons. It was like being on the dragon's back, rather too near the head.

Later Parícutín changed character. First he poured out rivers of lava. Upon Parangaricutiro, the nearest large village, the lava advanced, and most of the inhabitants fled, taking with them the image from the church. The village was engulfed. Then he gave out dust, nothing but dust and more dust. More than a hundred miles away in Ajijic we were showered for several weeks with black grit, and all round the volcano there was desolation. In Uruapan, fields and orchards were blighted and the dust settled on the houses, on the roofs, on the sills, everywhere. It drifted through every crevice. It filled and fouled the ponds and pools, and the parched cattle died, choked to death. It killed the poultry. It even killed some children who had gone to glean in the stricken fields, a storming flurry of it catching and suffocating them. Then it rained, and a fine mud came through the air; then more dust, forming a treacherous cake over the mud. In the towns the roofs collapsed, and for days on end only a murky half light came from the hidden sun. Priests rode the dark, choking streets in cars, standing on the running boards and calling the people to penance, to avert this retribution for their sins. From Uruapan, whither the first refugees had fled, people were now fleeing down the dim and muffled roads. This went on for weeks. High officials visited the region and relief was organized. Then the dust abated. No longer did it quench the sky. The lava still flowed but slowly. Experts prophesied that Parícutín would last only a few years, a nova among volcanoes. But all around it the country was a desert. This was what the Professor wanted to see.

Since my first visit the local authorities had done much to turn what was once the roughest of tracks



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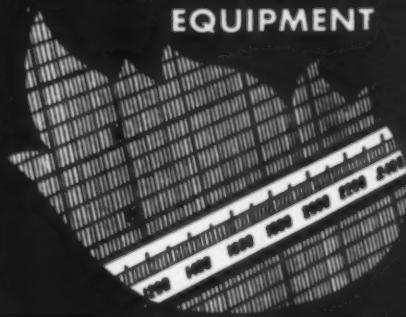
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into a practicable dirt road, and no doubt, if the tourist traffic had increased, further improvements would have been made. But what had been a torrent of cars had now, with the decreasing activity of the mountain, dwindled to a trickle. It only requires the appearance of a new volcano, an event reported mistakenly at least once a year, for Paricutin's tourist value to fall still further, and the road will crumble and eventually disappear back into the earth as adobes do. As it was, the going was rough. After a mile or more we came to an arroyo over which was a wooden bridge, some of whose planking for no apparent reason had been removed. Two small boys smirkingly directed us to a hamlet that lay off the road to our right, loudly demanding centavos and, to my surprise, matches. These small blackmailers were firmly repulsed by a flood of invective from Silvanito, and we lumbered down into the village, where I asked a man the way to the volcano.

"Who knows," he answered. No note of interrogation in his voice, no smile, nothing. A woman in a nearby doorway, ragged and emaciated, said coldly, "To the left." And suddenly, for the first time in Mexico, I was aware of what D. H. Lawrence called the "obsidian stare," impenetrable, defiant, and hostile. I am not in sympathy with Lawrence's attitude toward the Indians in their relations with the whites; I am more at home with earlier and less emphatic writers—with Mme. Calderón de la Barca, who notices everything and pontificates about nothing, or with Charles Macomb Flandreau whose wit and penetration is always tempered with kindness and geniality. But here, in this remote Tarasco village, I could see eye to eye with Lawrence. There was hatred and mockery in the atmosphere. I suppose it was hardly surprising. To the Tarasco countryman the volcano has brought ruin, misery, and starvation. He has had no part in the profits of the hotelkeepers and taximen of the town, and it is only natural that he has little sympathy for the wealthy travelers who come in cars with lavish picnic baskets to chatter and gloat over the cause of all his troubles.

We were all glad to leave the village. At the corner the Professor asked an elderly man the distance to the mountain.

"I do not know the road to Paricutin," he said gravely, as though he were a stranger in a big city. "They say it is ten kilometers."

By the time we had gone nearly twice that distance, we had risen several hundred feet, crossed numerous rickety plank bridges, and changed a wheel. The sun had disappeared, and the sky wore an unearthly, sulphurous tint. Dust was in the air, in the



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car; dust grated between our teeth; the road, which had been steep and stony, was now muffled with gray volcanic dust, save where the deep ruts had a fitting of red pumice. Through the ranks of sickly pines, tattered and moth eaten like half-fledged birds, wound sleek ribbons of gray silt brought down by the rains. It was some time since we had seen any animals, and the only sign of life was provided by a raven enjoying some nameless repast on a withered thorn tree. At our approach he heaved himself into the air and flapped clumsily ahead round a bend in the road, the scarlet flesh in his beak glowing against his plumage like the last live ember in a half-consumed coal fire. As we followed him round the curve, the landscape opened up into a slategray expanse fringed by ragged firs, and away beyond squat and dark, crouched the volcano, a huge inverted flowerpot from which a mournful plume of gritty, dusty smoke poured into the still air.

The road ends a few kilometers short of the volcano, and if you want to get closer, you must go on foot or hire mules in the settlement of tumble-down shacks where those who have refused to leave the remnant of their fields now live. It was soon evident that Silvanito wanted nothing further to do with the mountain.

"The car will be quite safe, señor," he said in a tragic voice, "for I shall guard it."

"Don't you want to come with us?"

"Certainly that yes. But who knows if somebody might not put sugar in the gasoline, like that time in Guadalajara."

• • •

I looked around at the congeries of miserable huts with their two or three patches of gray and stunted corn. It was clear there was no sugar here to waste, but I made sure the gas tank was locked.

"But, señor," said Silvanito, rather pink, "it would be bad if we lost one of the little valves of the tires. For the doubts one must stay and watch the car."

Several small boys had appeared from nowhere to look at us, so I suggested giving one of them a few centavos to look after the car.

"I do not have confidence," said Silvanito, grandly, "in these of up here."

So we left him and started up the rough track, guided by a child who said he'd show us where to hire the mules. At a bend in the road I looked back; six small boys were clustered round the hood of the car gaping, while Silvanito expounded.

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The mules were expensive, but our guide, a cheerful young native of the village of Paricutin, who introduced himself as Gerónimo López-to-serve-you, explained this by the fact that their food had come from many miles down the valley. As we rode along he talked.

"It came very slowly," he said, pointing to the tangled sea of gray-brown lava surrounding the half-submerged tower of Parangaricutiro's parish church. "Six months it took to flow, and now there are fifteen kilometers of it, or so they say."

In what is left of the village a few inhabitants still live. The Professor busied himself speculating about the effect of volcanic grit on the egg production of some scraggy hens we saw. I asked the guide if no one had been trapped in the village by the eruption.

"We all had good warning," he said, "though when that Dionisio, who first saw the smoke, came running to his neighbors, we didn't think much about it. You see, there was always a hole in that field from which the air blew very hot, and the boys would throw each others' sombreros into it so that they were cast back many meters into the air. It was a favorite game, so I for one didn't take Dionisio too seriously. But in the next hours there was much noise and smoke and fire, and the Señor Cura himself went up to look at it. When he came down the hill he called a meeting, and those of Paricutin came down to Parangaricutiro here, and we all put ourselves and our homes at the mercy of God. But later, when the dust and stones fell heavily and the ground shook, we were afraid to go into the church for Mass, for we thought it might fall down on us when we were inside. Of course, many people said it was a punishment for our sins, so naturally we were afraid, and we built a little chapel of wood outside. But now, as you may imagine, they say that if we had trusted in God more the lava would have stayed away from the village, but I do not think so."

He talked on, and the mules picked their way across the jagged surface of the lava. Mrs. Fountanney rode easily, looking straight ahead, never speaking; every now and then she leaned forward and patted

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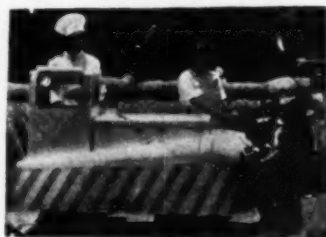
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her mule's neck. The Professor sat rigidly on his mount, cross-questioning the guide and stopping every few yards to focus his binoculars.

From minute to minute the coughing of the volcano came louder, like the snarling of a lion, full of menace but without the terror of his full-blooded roar. Our guide said he thought it wiser not to go any closer, and at the summit of a little hillock we halted. The air was heavy and still, and across the valley the huge bulk of the volcano now appeared in its true impressive proportions. The Professor dismounted and set up the tripod of his camera. Thin white smoke, like incense before an altar, arose round the base of the mountain, from the narrow streams of hot lava that still crept from the fissures in its flanks. From the crater itself mushrooms of black smoke burst forth every few seconds, and, as they began to break up, the noise of the discharge reached us across the intervening space, like the muffled roar of cannon.

"We say in these parts," said Gerónimo, "that it's a poor fire that won't warm somebody's pot. But who knows."

Optimism is inherent in the Mexican character, and the Indio is the master of making the best of things. This had been rich land inhabited by a prosperous community. Now it was a lunar desolation. What the lava had spared was a desert of gray volcanic silt, flat and smooth as satin, save where the rain had worn small pinnacles beneath the pumice stones that speckled its surface, giving the appearance of a rash of tiny mushrooms. On all the hillsides around us the trees still stood in their serried thousands, but it was as if they had been blasted bare by many lightnings; stripped and sere, their stark trunks looked brittle as old bones, the hills the grizzled, spiny appearance of hedgehogs. This was not a mere pecking of destruction leaving untouched places; this was not a leveling of tree and building, leaving the old earth ready to receive seed and spore, and in a season to put

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forth new greens; here not a square inch was spared; this land was totally dead.

The Professor ran here and there, enjoying himself, sifting ash through his fingers, examining volcanic rock, poking at lava. Mrs. Fountanny and I stared in silence across the waste—grassless, birdless, insectless.

"Look at that low bough," she said, pointing to a ruined tree near the path. "You would have said, wouldn't you, that it was meant for children to swing on?"

And suddenly we both wanted to go home, back to the fertile Chapala lakeside. We called to the Professor, and, as we turned our mules to go, a little speck of white caught my eye—a poppy, barely rooted in the gray ash, was bravely struggling to put forth its one stunted flower. Perhaps Gerónimo's optimism was not so preposterous after all. Flowers don't give way to despair. Why should he?

On the way back to the highway in the car, we passed a tumble-down shack, ash colored amid the poisoned fields. A family was sitting beside it, a chocolate-dark Tarasco and his wife, a little girl, a boy of ten or so. They had a burro and some bundles, cookpots and two chickens crowded into a wicker cage. I stopped and greeted them. Only the man could speak Spanish, and the others muttered together in the harsh, guttural Tarasco tongue. I asked if any of them wanted a lift.

"Thank you, señor," replied the man, "but we have come home."

They would not change their minds. Hopeful and unreasoning as the little poppy itself, they were prepared for the struggle to strike new roots into their ruined homeland. We left them there, squatting amid the cinders, gray brown and desolate as the blasted earth, patient and dignified as the hills themselves, waiting for goodness knows what, goodness knows when.

BALL BOY

Continued from page 24

not only the amenities of highly perfumed shave and haircut, but gossip from the big city. And he is at home among the peasants and small farmers.

* * *

In one Sunday's barbering, Chucho makes what it takes him a week to earn at the tennis club. He has rented a piece of land at eighty cents a month. On it he is building a house with his own hands. He is hoping to get a piece of the roof up before the rainy season.



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Keen, ingenious, they go everywhere, work at anything. In the towns they are the shoeshine boys and tourist guides. You see them sleeping at night on the plaza benches or on the steps of office buildings. Now and again they are caught in petty thievery and spend a few nights in jail. Some join traveling circuses and shows. Some learn a trade and grow respectable. One of them has become a wealthy industrialist and holds a cabinet post in the government.

Chucho is a lesser light of the adventurous army. He is not ambitious. He has seen much, and the seeing gave him pleasure. "There are so many people!" he says in wonder.

"So the wandering is over?" I asked him. "You are settled now?"

"When a man marries," said Chucho, "he makes a compact with God."

CUMULATIVE

Continued from page 26

"Stopped completely," don José echoed the boy's words. "Dios mio! What more? This spring that has flowed for a thousand years... stopped completely! Waters that have quenched the thirst of my fields, and my great-grandfather's fields, now without the gift of life... O God, what have I done?"

For a while Tacho stood motionless, looking expectantly at his master, as if he were a modern Moses who by waving a magic wand could make the water flow again; then, perceiving that the latter did nothing but stare blankly at the sky, he said, "Don Pepe, I think those horseless horsemen have dug a deep hole on the land above and have forced our Guadalupe Spring to enter their well, and that is how they have stolen our water."

Don José looked at the boy in silence, then waving his hands muttered, "Bueno. Leave me in peace." He walked back to the house and into the great sala, looking at the huge portraits of his ancestors adorning the walls, pausing at each one as if in silent salute, then reached the section draped in faded red velvet and occupied by a collection of old arms—an array of arquebuses, flintlocks, muskets, cutlasses, battleaxes.

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rapiers, sabers and daggers. Thoughtfully he contemplated the assortment, then took an ancient flintlock pistol. It was his special favorite, for during many fiestas he confounded his friends with its fine accuracy and hitting power in comparison with modern arms.

He fondled the ancient arm, cocked it, reached for a horn and poured a little powder on the firing pan, opened his mouth, placed the barrel between his teeth and squeezed the trigger. There was a flash and a crack and don José crumpled on the floor.

...

Some time later Tacho, who had been looking for him everywhere to impart the good news that the spring had begun to trickle again, found him prostrate in the sala. "Don José," he said. "Done José!" Then, trembling with fright, he screamed for help.

The kitchen servants rushed in—Carmen, Maria, Coneha, along with Pedro the stable-boy and several wild-eyed children. "Quick!" screamed Tacho. "Don Pepe has fainted. He has been upset. Had so much bad news today."

As they lifted him tenderly and bore him to a couch in the study, Tacho, stumbling over the pistol picked it up from the floor. "Look," he murmured to Pedro, "this damned pistol must have dropped off the wall when don Pepe fainted. It might have gone off. Thank God it did not."

"Good reason," said Pedro. "That little devil of my nephew Chucho told me that he took the bullet and the powder out of its barrel to make firecrackers last San Juan's day."

They all gathered about the limp still form of don José reposing over the couch, while Maria, kneeling on the floor, rubbed his temples with holy water. After a while he opened his eyes and feebly closed them again, uttering a minute sign.

"Hush," said Tacho. "Quiet. Our master is tired. Very tired. We must let him rest." And leaving the gaunt body resting under a thick sarape they tiptoed out of the room.

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